# Explanations and Corrections in the Gospel of Luke

by Thomas Earl Franklin

Self-published by Thomas Earl Franklin
1343 Richmond Drive N.E.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.
Copyright 2021
All the books quoted in this book are public-domain in the United States.
Corrected December 21, 2021

Group Registration Number with the U.S. Copyright Office and Date:
TXu002275948 / 2021-07-17
Application Title: Explanations and Corrections in the Gospel of Luke and 3 Other Unpublished Works.
[Group Registration] Contents:
Explanations and Corrections in the Gospel of Luke.
Syriac Interpretations of the Book of Daniel Translated From the 18th-Century Latin Versions of Petrus Benedictus and Joseph Simon Assemani.
The Idiomatic Usage of the "Last-Days" Idiom in the Greek Bible.
The Original Meaning of the Parable of the Good Shepherd.

## Table of Contents


Preface....3
Luke Reviewed and Altered Passages in Mark and Matthew....5
Correction of Matthew 26:64 and Mark 14:62....9
The Faithful and Wise Servant....14
Luke Thought That the Abomination of Desolation Was Armies....20
The Abomination of Desolation Stands and Tramples Like a Beast....23
In What Sense Was the Abomination Abominable?....24
Gentiles and Wild Beasts That Devour and Trample....25
What Does the Phrase "Of Desolation" Mean?....31
Applying the Above Lessons to Common Misinterpretations....32
Mark 13:14 and Matthew 24:16 Are Addressed to Unbelievers....35
Nestle's 1884 Theory Is Incompatible With Luke....45
Daniel 9:27 Did Not Refer to King Manasseh of Judah....47
The Abomination of Daniel 9:27 Is Not an Idol....50
Luke Removed the Ambiguity in Mark 13:14 and Matthew 24:15-16....52
Hebrew and Greek Words Translated As "Abomination"....59
The Meaning of the "Times of the Gentiles"....64
Luke Moved Some Verses in Matthew 24 and Mark 13 to Luke 17....78
How Angels Are Like Eagles....90
The Meaning of the Darkness of the Sun and Moon....92
Metaphors Combining the Sun, Moon, and Stars....96
Luke 21:25-26 Is a Complicated Substitute for Matthew 24:29-30 or Mark 13:24-25....99
Who Is in Perplexity in Isaiah 5:30?....106
The Sound of the Sea Causes the Perplexity of the Gentiles in Luke 21:25....110
God Will Growl and Look Upon the Earth (Isaiah 5:30)....112
All the Tribes of the Earth Shall Mourn (Matthew 24:30)....117
Correction of Matthew 12:38-42....119
Some Scholars Who Ignore Luke Accept a Late Date of Composition of Daniel....122
Other Scholars Who Also Ignore Luke Reject a Late Date of Composition of Daniel....127
The Epistle to the Hebrews Praises the Martyrs, Not the Maccabees....129

Some Have Said That the Son of Man of Daniel 7:13 Was Judas Maccabaeus.....144
The Desolation of the Temple by Antiochus Wasn't Prophesied.....146
The Thinking of 1 Maccabees.....149
Some Faithful Ancients Disagreed With Mattathias's Interpretations of Daniel.....161
The Thinking of 2 Maccabees.....163
English Mistranslations of Daniel 11:31 and 12:11.....173
The Son of Man Is Not Israel.....186
Daniel 11 and 12 May Not Be In Their Original Form.....189
The Interpretation of Josephus.....193
The Abomination of Desolation Is Not a Person Called Antichrist.....200
Neither History Nor Daniel 11 Is Clear.....208
Porphyry's Interpretation.....211
.....224
Bibliography.....225

## Preface.

This is a book of arguments about Bible interpretation. It is not possible to write a book about this subject without quoting numerous authors. I provided public-domain quotations to explain different Bible interpretations that exist. I am not aware of much support for my ideas in extant literature. But I quoted some authors who agreed in one point or another with me. Sometimes I had to translate Latin literature when I couldn't find a public-domain English translation.

I try to convince the reader that some Bible interpretations were originated by unreliable ancient writers, some of whom repeatedly lied or contradicted themselves. I show the reader that the reason that some Bible passages seem to have something missing is that there is something missing. And I say that Luke used Mark and Matthew's gospels when writing a new one. He needed to write a new one because of errors in those gospels and also because of then-existing misinterpretations. I show the consequences of these errors, including that Paul changed some of his earlier interpretations.

I have checked all the quotations from other authors in this book to be sure that they are public-domain. Most of the books were digitized by Google, Microsoft, or another organization. I avoided modernizing spelling, fonts, and punctuation. The Geneva Bible is an exception, because of the spelling of the marginal notes. I only use public-domain Bible translations. I usually preserve italics found in the originals (like ASV and Brenton). I tried to make it clear when I myself added formatting (like bold, italics, and brackets) to quotations to point out certain words. Most of the books I cited once or twice are in footnotes, not the bibliography.

I didn't write this book from an outline. I was writing a book on Luke to see what the consequences would be if Luke was precisely correct everywhere that he deviated from Matthew and Mark. I was also writing a book attacking Maccabean interpretations of Daniel. I combined the books. If I hadn't combined them, the lengthy information I added criticizing the Maccabees and Josephus would have still had to be included, but as very long endnotes instead of as chapters.

Here are some of the ideas in my book that are unique in extant literature, as far as I know:

- Luke was written as a reaction to errors and obscure passages in Mark and Matthew. Luke knew that Malachi 3:1 was not written by Isaiah. He knew that Jesus never told the high priest that he would see Jesus on the right hand of God. He knew that the "six days" before the Transfiguration was incorrect.
- Paul's belief in the man of lawlessness (the man of sin) in 2 Thessalonians was based on Matthew 24, and was based on an incorrect interpretation of the abomination of desolation. Paul had changed his understanding by the time that his companion Luke wrote his gospel.
- The abomination of desolation was the fourth beast of Daniel, and it is also correct to say, metonymically, that it was the armies of that beast.
- The abomination of desolation was not a sign for Christians to flee from Jerusalem. Matthew 24:16 and the corresponding passage in Mark are addressed to unbelievers.
- Luke 21:25-26 refers to Isaiah 5:30, without which verse Matthew 24:30 can't be understood.
- The phrase "Times of the Gentiles" in Luke refers to the phrase "time and times and half a time" in Daniel. The numbers in the expression in Daniel were figurative. I learned when writing this book that some Calvinists recognized this. But I give proofs of the idea that I believe are unique.
- Jesus didn't accept any of numerous interpretations of Daniel that were based on the Books of the Maccabees and Josephus.
- Daniel 11:31 and 12:11 are mistranslated in all Bibles because the translators were misled by the idea that the abomination of desolation is an idol.

I say in this book that certain interpretations rejected by Luke are reasonable and scriptural, but incorrect. I believe that they are incorrect because I side with Luke. I think that Luke knew what Jesus really meant. And I think that Jesus correctly interpreted the Hebrew Scriptures.

## Luke Reviewed and Altered Passages in Mark and Matthew.

Luke had the gospels of Matthew and Mark before him when he wrote his own gospel. And he knew the contents of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Luke clarified whatever was obscure in Matthew and Mark. He corrected whatever was wrong. What Luke wrote is the closest we can come to knowing what Jesus did, said, and thought. Traditions, commentaries, and even books of the Christian Scriptures that disagree with Luke are mistaken. Jesus's understanding of Daniel derived from Luke is unlike any existing interpretation of Daniel. Christians turned a deaf ear to Luke at an early date. This resulted in wrong explanations of prophecies in the gospels and in the Book of Daniel.

Luke implied that he was familiar with other gospels in Luke 1:1–3 (ASV):

> Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus;

My interpretation of those verses isn't completely unprecedented. Adam Clarke said something similar in his comment on Luke 1:2:

> Verse 2. *Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses*] Probably this alludes to the Gospels of *Matthew* and *Mark*, which it is likely were written before St. Luke wrote his, and on the *models* of which he professes to write his own; and *απ αρχης, from the beginning*, must mean, from the time that Christ first began to proclaim the glad tidings of the kingdom: and *αυτοπται, eye-witnesses*, must necessarily signify, those who had been with him from the beginning, and consequently had the best opportunities of knowing the truth of every fact.

I explain numerous departures from Mark and Matthew in this book. I will first mention some that commentators have frequently written about. I will begin with a discrepancy commonly discussed in commentaries. Luke knew that Matthew 17:1 and Mark 9:2 said "after six days". But Luke 9:28 reads "about eight days after".

Commentaries usually harmonize the three gospels like Adam Clarke did in his comment on Matthew 17:1:

> Mark, ix. 2, has the same number; but Luke says, ix. 28, after *eight* days. The reason for this difference seems to be the following: Matthew and Mark reckon the days *from* that mentioned in the preceding chapter, *to* that mentioned in this; Luke includes *both* days, as well as the *six* intermediate: hence, the one makes *eight*, the other *six*, without any contradiction.

Like many other commentators, Clarke was saying that Mark and Matthew only counted the six complete intervening days, but that Luke counted two partial days, the partial days being the day of Peter's confession when the period began, and also the day of the Transfiguration when the period ended. Clarke, like me, believed that Luke used Matthew and Mark as models for his gospel. Why did Luke change an established reading that had nothing wrong with it? Since, according to Clarke, Luke modeled his gospel on Matthew and Mark, didn't his readers think he was contradicting those gospels?

Here are some Scriptures that give insight on the evangelists' phraseology. Mark wrote that the Son of Man would rise "after three days" in Mark 8:31, 9:31, and 10:34, consistently using the Greek preposition "meta" (*μετα*), which is translated "after" in the ASV and also frequently translated that way in other versions. The phrase "after six days" in Mark 9:2 uses the same preposition. So the phrase is the same, differing only in the number of days. Luke changed "after three days" to "the third day" in Luke 18:33 and Luke 24:7. So why didn't Luke change "after six days" in Mark 9:2 to "the sixth day", instead of to "about eight days after" (Luke 9:28)?

Luke probably didn't think that Mark and Matthew were wrong when they said "after three days". They probably really meant "on the third day". He recognized the phrase as an idiom, a nonliteral expression, synonymous with "on the third day". Some commentators have pointed out that the Pharisees asked Pilate to guard Jesus's sepulchre "until the third day" (Matthew 27:64). The Pharisees used the adjective for "third" (*τριτης*) because they knew that that is what Jesus had meant. That Greek adjective is the same one used in Luke 24:7, 21, and 46. This explanation is convincing. That is probably the meaning that Mark 8:31, 9:31, and 10:34 were intended to convey. But applying these facts to the passages under discussion shows that Luke did not accept Mark 9:2. Luke wrote "about eight days after", which

deliberately contradicts Mark and Matthew. If Luke had written "[on] the sixth day", there would have been no contradiction.

There is great disagreement among scholars about the dating of the synoptic gospels. I insist that these gospels were written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and that Luke saw written copies of Mark and Matthew. Contradictory passages in Luke exist because either (a) Luke did not agree with the preceding gospels, or else (b) Luke wanted to modify passages that were often misunderstood to stop the misinterpretation. Luke never wrote carelessly. A lot of his gospel was provoked by what others had said or written.

Throughout this book I say that Luke changed certain things for Theophilus's benefit. His gospel and Acts are both books addressed to Theophilus. So traditional interpreters have often assumed that the two books were written just for Theophilus and at the same time. Acts ends with Paul's imprisonment in Rome. Luke was there. But could Luke have done the research that was described in the first verses of his gospel when in Rome? Or did he do it years earlier in the Holy Land, where he could interview eye-witnesses? If Luke wrote his gospel before he knew Theophilus, he changed "six days" to "eight days" for the benefit of his original readers, Greek-speaking Christians or whoever they were. But if he wrote his gospel exclusively for Theophilus, he made the change just for him.

Besides the "eight days", another simple example of Luke's changes concerns the incorrect attribution of Malachi 3:1 to Isaiah in Mark 1:2-3. He quoted the verse from Malachi in Luke 7:27 without error, saying, "this is he of whom it is written", deliberately omitting mention of Isaiah.

Jerome said in his commentary on Matthew 3:3 that Porphyry reproached Mark for thinking that a verse from Malachi came from Isaiah. Nathaniel Lardner translated from Jerome's commentary on Matthew 3:3:

> Porphyry compares this place with the beginning of St. Mark's gospel … since this quotation is composed out of Malachi [iii. 1.] and Isaiah [xl. 3.] he asks, how comes it to pass that it is all said to be taken from Isaiah?

Luke 3:4-6 has a longer quotation from Isaiah than Matthew and Mark have, Isaiah 40:3-5 from the Septuagint or another Greek version. Thomas Hartwell Horne wrote[1]:

---

1 An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, From the 4th Corrected Edition. Volume 2 (Philadelphia, 1825), by Thomas Hartwell Horne. (See the

> Thus, Luke, who wrote his Gospel for the instruction of *Gentile* converts, quotes (iii. 4-6.) not less than *three* verses from the prophet Isaiah; while Matthew (iii. 3.) and Mark (i. 3.) quote only the *first* of them. But it was necessary to Luke's purpose that he should thus proceed so far, in order to assure the Gentiles, that they were destined to be partakers of the privileges of the gospel, and to *see the salvation of God*.

Horne must have interpreted the words "all flesh" in Luke 3:6 (and Isaiah 40:5 LXX) to include the gentiles, which makes sense. Maybe Luke extended the quotation, like Horne said. Or maybe he found those words in a gospel.

Jerome suggested in his commentary on Matthew that the name Isaiah was added by the error of copyists ("Nos autem nomen Isaiae putamus additum scriptorum vitio"). There are other possibilities. But my usual assumption for this book is that Luke read the same gospel that we have. If the reading of Mark 1:2-3 that Porphyry had, and that we have today, was the original reading, then Mark either wrote carelessly or made a mistake. The reason for the mistake is lost to history. This is what I suspect happened: Luke found the error in his copy of Mark, knew it was wrong, and corrected it. The next chapter shows that gospels have mistakes, and we shouldn't insist on vindicating incorrect passages.

I have mentioned Adam Clarke several times. In his book, The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, he said that the most authentic text does indeed say "written by Isaiah the prophet", by which he must mean "by Isaiah alone". And he further says that "this prophecy is found both in Isaiah and Malachi". His words seem poorly chosen. There are two prophecies, not one. He must mean to say that Mark 1:2 is from Malachi and Mark 1:3 from Isaiah. But he is silent on the important implication of the correct textual reading, that Mark made a mistake in his scriptural reference.

My book is not silent on discrepancies between the gospels. It is disrespectful to Luke to ignore his corrections and explanations.

Compared to the examples above, Luke's deviations from the prophetic parts of Matthew and Mark are more important and also easier to be sure about. It is easy to understand his method of writing Luke 21 by pretending that he only had Mark 13 in front of him. I will quote some verses from Mark 13 (American Standard Version of 1901) below. Luke changed these two passages because of obscure metaphors. The

---

chapter "Causes of the Seeming Discrepancies in the Quotations from the Old Testament").

rest of my book will show that practically every word below is subject to misinterpretation:

> But when ye see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not (let him that readeth understand), then let them that are in Judaea flee unto the mountains: (13:14) But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens shall be shaken. (13:24-25)

Here is a passage that Luke moved from the incorrect context to the correct, original context:

> and let him that is on the housetop not go down, nor enter in to take anything out of his house: and let him that is in the field not return back to take his cloak. (13:15-16)

Other chapters in this book explain why Luke objected to some of the passages in Mark 13 and Matthew 24 and why he moved or rewrote them. Luke's changes show that he would not have accepted any surviving commentary either on Matthew or on Daniel. Luke believed that the abomination of desolation was the Roman army, with or without idolatrous standards. He did not understand the abomination of desolation to be a sign for believing Christians to escape Jerusalem. He didn't understand the "time and times and half a time" of the Book of Daniel as a number of years (or months or days) that had to be figured out. He understood the signs of the heavens to have a psychological meaning. He made a reference to Isaiah 5:30 that has escaped the understanding of Christians for hundreds of years.

## Correction of Matthew 26:64 and Mark 14:62.

The hardest and most interesting part of this book pertains to Jesus's speech about when the temple would be destroyed. But here is another change that Luke made that has a shorter explanation. This example makes it clear that Mark and Matthew contain mistakes. In Matthew 26:64 ASV, Jesus tells the high priest:

> … Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.

Similarly, Jesus tells the high priest in Mark 14:62:

> … ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.

This is the way Luke saw those two scriptures:

> … Henceforth ~~ye shall see~~ the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power [of God], ~~and coming on the clouds of heaven~~.

And:

> … ~~ye shall see~~ the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power [of God], ~~and coming with the clouds of heaven~~.

Luke 22:69 reads:

> But from henceforth shall the Son of man be seated at the right hand of the power of God.

It reads in the Douay:

> But hereafter the son of man shall be sitting on the right hand of the power of God.

Notice that Matthew and Mark use the puzzling expression "right hand of Power". Luke saw the ambiguous words of those gospels and, keeping the original words as much as possible, removed some of the ambiguity by adding the words "**of God**" [*του θεου* in Greek]. Consider Hebrews 1:3, which says that Jesus "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty". Hebrews 10:12 expresses the same thing without requiring interpretation: "sat down on the right hand **of God**". Luke didn't want Theophilus to be confused by the expression "the right hand of Power". Elsewhere Luke spoke of "the right hand **of God**" (Acts 2:33-34 and 7:55-56). Theophilus learned in Acts 2:34 that the expression is an allusion to a passage in Psalm 110. Psalm 110:1 is the original source for all the scriptures mentioned above, and it didn't say "the right hand of Power" or "of the Majesty", but (ASV): "Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, Until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The phrase "right hand of Power" (as also "the right hand of the Majesty") means "the right hand of Jehovah", that is to say, "the right hand of God". Maybe the religious leaders, thinking the Divine Name was too holy to say, used "Power" as a substitute for "Jehovah".

Luke got rid of the words "ye shall see" (which is the one word *οψεσθε* in Greek). The context required that this apply to the high priest and the members of the council. The words were never spoken. This is one of several passages that Luke changed because what he found in Matthew or Mark was wrong. And Luke didn't explicitly say that those gospels were wrong or why they were wrong. He just corrected them. In Acts 7:55, Luke said that Stephen did see the Son of Man at God's right hand in heaven (but not coming on the clouds of heaven, which was a different time):

> he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God

If being "full of the Holy Spirit", was a requirement to be able to see Jesus on the right hand of God, then the religious leaders under discussion never saw him there. Luke relates in Acts 2:33, through the mouth of Peter, that the Son of Man sat on the right hand of God right after his resurrection:

> Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear.

Some other translations and numerous commentators agree with the ASV above in saying that Jesus was resurrected **by**, or **by means of**, God's right hand, instead of **to** God's right hand. Even if they are right about this verse, Jesus was exalted **by** God's right hand **to** God's right hand. The next verse, Acts 2:34, quotes Psalm 110:1:

> The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

Other passages in the Christian Scriptures confirm that Jesus was resurrected to God's right hand. But the return of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven was a different time. Luke 21:27 refers to the return of Jesus at a time of great anguish for the whole world after the destruction of Jerusalem and after the captivity of the Jews (Luke 21:27). According to Acts 1, the apostles saw Jesus disappear into a cloud out of their sight. The angels tell them in Acts 1:11 that Jesus:

> who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven.

So Luke couldn't bear Mark and Matthew seemingly making the two periods equivalent. And then Luke made sure that the reader of Acts would know when Jesus

sat on God's right hand and when Jesus was going to return in the clouds. Jesus sat at God's right hand soon after his death according to chapters 2 and 7 of Acts. But Jesus's return in the clouds was still future at the end of Acts. That was the time that living Christians were to be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:16-17). So Luke eliminated the part about coming on the clouds of heaven in Luke 22:69 so Theophilus wouldn't be confused or misinformed.

Suppose for example that the death of Jesus occurred in 30 A.D., the date given in Kerr's harmony of gospels. That is when Jesus sat at God's right hand. And suppose that Luke wrote his gospel and also Acts for Theophilus in 63 A.D., an approximate date given in some commentaries. Then Theophilus would naturally wonder just when those rulers had seen the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power during the previous 33 years. From reading Matthew and Mark, Theophilus might have thought that the time the Son of Man sat on the right hand of Power was the same time as he would be seen in the clouds of heaven. But Luke made sure he didn't make that mistake.

We might wonder, in defense of Matthew and Mark, if the chief priests did indeed see Jesus at the right hand of power, not literally, but figuratively at the time of Jesus's execution, when they saw the miracles like the darkness. Or did they see this sight figuratively by seeing the miracles recorded in Acts of the Apostles? Or, we might wonder whether they were destined to see the Son of Man coming in the clouds at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, which was supposed to come before the generation passed away. The answer to all of this is No. Luke would have written those interpretations into Luke and Acts if they were correct. We don't need to torment our minds trying to defend Matthew if we accept the fact that Luke corrected Matthew. Luke didn't want Theophilus to be misled and perplexed, wondering about the high priest and the council seeing Jesus. He wanted Theophilus to know that Jesus had simply said that soon thereafter the Son of Man would be at the right hand of God.

The pronoun "Ye" in Mark 14:62 is an archaic second-person plural pronoun, the plural form of "thou". Since the word is plural, it refers to more people than the high priest who Matthew and Mark said was speaking to Jesus. Before Luke wrote his gospel, first-century Christians knew that the Jewish religious leaders who condemned Jesus never saw Jesus in heaven, so they must have either thought that Jesus's statement was mistaken, or else interpreted Jesus's words figuratively, as do later commentators.

Consider Acts chapter 5. It says that the high priest and other rulers of the Jews were jealous (verse 17) because of the miracles worked by the apostles (verses 12-16). So they threw the apostles in prison. But an angel opened the prison doors and released them (verses 18-19). The apostles were later brought to the high priest and the council. Peter and the apostles said in Acts 5:30-33 ASV:

> The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him. But they, when they heard this, were cut to the heart, and were minded to slay them.

It is true that the high priest and the Sadducees figuratively “saw” the heavenly Jesus, endowed with power by God. That is, they saw evidence of his resurrected life and power. The apostles were performing the same miracles Jesus did before his death, and it should have been obvious that the apostles weren't capable of what they were doing. Jesus was somehow healing people by means of an invisible hand. If the religious authorities didn't grasp that the apostles had heavenly help, they should have understood it the next day after an angel freed them from prison. But Luke knew the original meaning of Jesus's statement, and he set the record straight by omitting the misleading words in Mark and Matthew. Luke says that Jesus simply told them that he would be enthroned at God's right hand, not that they would see him. The religious leaders reacted emotionally in Acts. They were jealous. Later they were "cut to the heart" to the extent that they "were minded to slay them". This language really is reminiscent of certain metaphorical passages that describe the emotions of those who would see the Son of Man, such as Luke 21:25-27 and Mark 13:24-26. Nevertheless, however similar they may seem, those two passages don't refer to the time period of Acts of the Apostles at all. I explain elsewhere that Luke 21:25-27 refers to a future time when the gentiles, not the Jewish religious leaders, would be afraid of the enthroned, heavenly Son of Man. Luke was keenly aware of the danger of confusing literal and figurative language, as other chapters in this book will show. And his writing does not allow for a figurative interpretation of how the high priest and the council would see the Son of Man.

Luke wrote in Acts 3:21 that Jesus would remain in heaven until "the restoration of all things". That would be a time when, in the words of two angels of Acts 1:11,

> … this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven.

And that promised coming of Jesus in the clouds never came during Acts of the Apostles.

If Porphyry's lost books are ever found, they may include the same objection that Edward Evanson made. He quoted the passage under discussion and reproached it, saying[2]:

> "nevertheless, from this time forth, *shall ye see* the son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven:" a prediction absolutely false, because the Jewish nation, from that time to this have never seen any such thing, but still remain incredulous to his being the promised Christ.

## The Faithful and Wise Servant.

This chapter isn't simple. But it is easier to understand than Luke 21. I will start by explaining how the gospels of Matthew and Mark reveal that they have fragments of a longer original. Matthew 24 (verse 45) begins a parable abruptly with a question:

> Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath set over his household, to give them their food in due season?

Luke 12 has a similar question, but the question is not abrupt, because Luke gives the context and explains the reason for the question.

Mark 13:37 says:

> And what I say unto you, I say unto all …

But there is no antecedent for the word "all" in Mark 13. Luke 12 has a similar phrase, but clearly explains who is meant by the pronoun "all". Mark 13:32-37 is probably what remains of a lost or barely-legible page. Who is "you" and who is "all" in Mark 13:37? According to verse 3, "you" means "Peter and James and John and Andrew". Those four were the only ones to whom Jesus addressed this prophecy.

---

2 The Dissonance of the Four Generally Received Evangelists, etc., by Edward Evanson, (Ipswich, 1792).

Mark 13 doesn't define another group. Mark 13 doesn't make sense as written since the reader is left in suspense, expecting a definition of "all", or the introduction of these people, but never being told who they are. The word "all" betrays the fact that the passage has been removed from its original context, which context is to be found in Luke 12. Mark 13:37 is reminiscent of Luke 12:41:

> And Peter said, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even unto all?

James Stuart Russell commented on this point[3]:

> It is worthy of notice also that in Mark xiii. 34-37, where we can detect evident traces of this parable, the question of St. Peter is distinctly answered, 'What I say unto *you*, I say unto *all*, Watch;' a statement which would be out of place when our Lord was speaking to four persons, but quite appropriate when speaking to a multitude.

Some commentators have said that the parables are merely similar, and were said at different times. But I do not agree. This parable is one of the major deviations of Luke from Matthew 24 and Mark 13, and I think that Luke deliberately left it out of Jesus's prophecy about the destruction of Jerusalem in Luke 21. I don't think that Mark was guilty of poor writing. I suspect that Luke got most of the contents of his 12th chapter from now-lost pages of Mark. He may have read a longer Mark than we have. (Compare Mark 16:12-13, which may have once contained everything in Luke 24:13-35.) But if Mark really wrote his 13th chapter exactly as we have it, then it must be that Luke ignored both Mark and Matthew and got Luke 12 elsewhere.

If Theophilus read the parable in Matthew 24, he might have looked for contextual clues for its meaning, and he might have mistakenly thought that the Parable of the Faithful and Wise Servant was part of the sign that the disciples asked about in Matt. 24:3. But I learn from Luke that the parable is interpolated or out of sequence in Matthew and is not a sign for the future. It was a serious warning that was immediately in effect as soon as it was given. That warning was that no matter how important any Christian leader seemed to be, he was not assured of being part of the "little flock" that was to receive the kingdom (Luke 12:32). Luke 12 shows that this kind of exhortation doesn't belong only in a "last days" discourse.

---

3 The Parousia: A Critical Inquiry Into the New Testament Doctrine of Our Lord's Second Coming, by James Stuart Russell, (First anonymous Edition, London, 1878). Digitized by Google.

Luke knew that Matthew 24:45-51 didn't belong with the rest of Matthew 24. He couldn't leave those verses in Jesus's speech about the end times. Luke needed to set the record straight about when these words were spoken. That is, they weren't spoken by Jesus after having been asked: "when shall these things be? and what *shall b*e the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" The details about this parable in Luke 12 confirm that the parable in Matthew is dislocated and abbreviated.

You have to carefully read Luke 12 to understand who the little flock is, and also to be sure who the faithful and wise servant is in Matt. 24:45. Luke introduces two groups, the many thousands of the multitude and the disciples, in Luke 12:1:

> In the mean time, when the many thousands of the multitude were gathered together, insomuch that they trod one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

Jesus began to talk to his "disciples first of all" in verse 1. But Jesus began to talk to the multitude in verse 13:

> And one out of the multitude said unto him, Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me.

Jesus talks to the multitude about materialism through verse 21. Jesus begins to speak to the disciples again in verse 22:

> And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for *your* life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.

In verse 31 Jesus says to the disciples:

> Yet seek ye his kingdom, and these things shall be added unto you.

Then in verse 32, Jesus begins to speak to a third group, the little flock, that sounds at first like it must be the disciples:

> Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Jesus continues talking to the little flock through verse 40. Then Peter, one of the disciples, asks (in verse 41) whether the words addressed to the "little flock" (verse 32) were spoken to the disciples or to all, including the multitude:

> And Peter said, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even unto all?

Jesus answers Peter enigmatically, beginning his answer to the question with another question, and not specifying which of the two groups Peter gave as choices. Jesus is actually subdividing the group Peter belonged to (= "us") into three subgroups (verses 43-44, verses 45-46, and verses 47-48):

> 42 And the Lord said, Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? 43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath. 45 But if that servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; 46 the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the unfaithful. 47 And that servant, who knew his lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*; 48 but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more.

After Jesus obscurely answered Peter about which group would inherit the kingdom, he speaks to the multitude in Luke 12:54:

> And he said to the multitudes also, When ye see a cloud rising in the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it cometh to pass.

Jesus continues to speak to the multitude through Luke 12:59. When Peter asked whether Jesus spoke to the disciples or to the multitude, he probably expected Jesus to say that he was speaking to the disciples, and that they were the little flock that Jesus had said would be given the kingdom. So the question was whether Jesus was telling everybody present or just the disciples that the Father was going to give them the kingdom. The disciples were a little group compared to the multitude, so it made sense that they might be the "little flock".

But the simple analysis above fails to account for Jesus's indirect answer[4]. Jesus didn't answer Peter: "I am saying this to the little flock of disciples." That would have taken for granted that all the disciples would be faithful. Jesus is actually introducing a third group when he says (vs 32):

> Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Since the identification of the members of the third group, the little flock, was uncertain, Jesus's words were rhetorical, spoken as an apostrophe. The little flock is a third group. It is not all Christian leaders, but only the subgroup of those who turn out to be faithful. Jesus is not promising the kingdom unconditionally to either the disciples or to everybody present. Instead of answering who was going to get the kingdom, Jesus asked a question. Jesus didn't know at that time which ones of Peter's group would prove faithful. The lord was going to leave servants (meaning the disciples) over his household (the multitudes) when he left (died.) But when the Lord would return, at an unexpected time, he would punish the evil servants who were mistreating his servants (the multitude). That meant they wouldn't receive the kingdom. The Lord would bless the servant who was still faithfully doing his job feeding the Lord's household. Verse 44 says:

> Of a truth I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath.

That means that the disciples who were faithful at the Lord's return would be given the kingdom, which seems to mean rulership over the multitudes. Some commentaries say something similar to the above. But commentaries avoid discussing the plain fact that Jesus was warning his apostles. If we take it for granted that they died faithful, we think that Jesus's warning was unnecessary. But Jesus wondered if any would die faithful, saying in Luke 18:8:

> I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

Luke 12 helps explain the Faithful and Wise Servant in Matthew 24:45. The parables both in Luke 12 and Matthew 24 are about Jesus's servants who are in

---

4 Other questions for which Jesus gave indirect answers and made the questioner figure out the answer include John 14:22, Matthew 11:3; Luke 10:25, 29; Luke 17:37; John 8:53; and Matthew 15:12.

positions of oversight, feeding the household with spiritual food. The parable in Matthew says almost nothing about the multitude of believers, but only about the relatively few in charge of them. Both parables ask who the faithful and wise servant (or steward) is and show that the answer is unknown till the Lord returns. Both parables offer a reward to the faithful servant and punishment to the servant who was unfaithful or evil upon the Lord's return.

Jesus didn't promise that his disciples would be faithful. The Bible records that Judas was not faithful, and other disciples might have also been unfaithful, even though no such thing was recorded in ecclesiastical history.

The context in Matthew 24 and 25 further substantiates this view. The illustration is conspicuously in the midst of a long series of exhortations to be faithful and industrious, since the disciples wouldn't know the day and hour (verse 36) when their master would come and inspect them:

- **Matthew 24:40–42** (ASV): Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken, and one is left: … Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh.
- **Matthew 24:45–51**: Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath set over his household, to give them their food in due season? … But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord tarrieth … the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not … .
- **Matthew 25:1–13:** … But at midnight there is a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him … And while they went away to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage feast: and the door was shut … . Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour.
- **Matthew 25:14–30**: … Now after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them … . His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord … . But his lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I did not scatter … .

The Parable of the Faithful and Wise Servant in Matt. 24 is similar to the other parables in the context: the ten virgins, and the three servants, and also similar to the parable in Luke 12. All these parables advise people to keep on the watch since there will be a day of reckoning at an unknown time. There are two groups of people in the

Parable of the Ten Virgins; some virgins were wise and others foolish. In the Parable of the Faithful and Wise Servant of Matthew 24:45-51, the servant over the household might turn out to be either faithful and wise, or else evil. There is also a third group mentioned in Luke 12[5] (the servant that "made not ready, nor did according to his will"). And there is an intermediate outcome in Matthew 25:22 (the slave who had two talents).

The Parable of the Talents appears to have the same meaning as the two versions of the Parable of the Faithful and Wise Servant. If Luke had included all these parables from Matthew in his gospel, he would have put them in their complete, original contexts, as he did with the parable of the faithful and wise servant. He wouldn't have left the reader guessing what each one meant.

## Luke Thought That the Abomination of Desolation Was Armies.

The important part of this book begins here. Compare Mark 13:14 with Luke 21:20:

- Mark 13:14: But when ye see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not (let him that readeth understand), then let them that are in Judaea flee unto the mountains:
- Luke 21:20-21: But when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand. Then let them that are in Judaea flee unto the mountains; and let them that are in the midst of her depart out; and let not them that are in the country enter therein.

Despite the exhortation "let him that readeth understand", Luke knew that a lot of people misunderstood anyway. So he rephrased Jesus's words replacing a metaphor with its meaning and using synonymous repetitions. Some of the ideas guiding Luke in his rewrite were:

- Luke knew that the desolating abomination of Mark 13 and of Daniel 9:27 (Douay) was the fourth beast in Daniel chapter 7. The beast could be construed as a king, his kingdom, or his armies. Luke knew that Jesus meant armies.

---

5 In one way of looking at it, there are three categories of servants in the parable of the faithful and wise steward in Luke 12:42-48: the faithful steward, the unfaithful steward, and the steward who simply didn't do his lord's will. There are also 3 groups in Jesus's audience in Luke 12: the disciples, the multitude, and the little flock.

- Gentile armies ought not be in Judea around Jerusalem, because gentiles are unclean and Jerusalem should be holy. The standing of the fourth beast of Daniel 7 represented the besieging or encompassing of the city by an army of gentile soldiers.
- Two very different clauses mean the same thing. To say that the Jerusalemites should flee is the same as to say that the desolation of Jerusalem was at hand.
- Luke knew that the phrase "abomination of desolation" meant an abomination or gentile army that was to desolate Jerusalem. So he changed the metaphor to unambiguous prose.
- The words "let them that are in Judaea flee to the mountains" meant to flee to avoid getting caught in a siege. Luke added explanatory words after the clause, saying in different words what people in a city and in the country should do before any siege that was certain to be successful and devastating.

Notice that Luke turned the phrase "of desolation" into a clause, making it clear that the abomination desolates, and that Jerusalem is the thing it is going to desolate. I say more about that elsewhere.

Luke probably substituted the word "Jerusalem" for the phrase "where it ought not" because too many readers did not understand correctly. And Luke substituted "armies" for "the abomination of desolation" because some people, maybe even including Theophilus for whom he wrote, erroneously interpreted the abomination of desolation as an individual called the Antichrist or the Man of Sin, just as some people do today. Or Theophilus might have heard other wrong theories that I mention elsewhere in this book.

An English translator reveals something about his interpretation by his choice of pronouns in this passage. Some English Bibles are similar to the ASV and say: "where **he** ought not" in Mark 13:14. Those Bibles may be guided by a masculine participle in Greek, or else by the doctrine that the abomination is the Antichrist. The Antichrist would have to be called "he", not "it", in English, if the Antichrist is conceived to be a man. But more translations read "where **it** ought not", possibly being guided by the idea that the abomination of desolation is either an idol or abominable pollution, which things can't be called "he" in English.

In Luke 19:43-44, before Jesus's longer prophecy about when the temple would be destroyed, Jesus threatens Jerusalem with a devastating siege:

> For the days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

In the verses above, Luke uses language later echoed in Luke 21:20-24, referring to a devastating defeat by gentile armies. Luke 21:20 says that Jerusalem would be compassed, or besieged, the same thing that was described in chapter 19. Just like the last quoted passage, Luke 21:23 alludes to the special difficulty for women with children at a time of war and siege. The women knew that children were sometimes eaten during sieges (Deut. 28:53-57). Verse 24 refers to being killed by the sword and being taken captive into foreign countries, and also identifies the armies as gentile. Luke added his unique sections in chapters 19 and 23 clearly referring to sieges, not just because he learned it from oral tradition or from a lost section of Mark, but to make sure that Theophilus understood that the abomination of desolation was a gentile army destined to besiege and destroy Jerusalem, not Antichrist or an idol.

Albert Barnes wrote this in his footnote on Matt. 24:15:

> 15. The abomination of desolation. This is a Hebrew expression, meaning an abominable or hateful destroyer. The Gentiles were all held in abomination by the Jews. Acts x. 28. The abomination of desolation, means the Roman army; and is so explained by Luke xxi. 20. The Roman army is farther called the abomination, on account of the images of the emperor and the eagles, carried in front of the legions, and regarded by the Romans with divine honors.

The objections I have to his explanation may seem petty. But he should have called it "the destroying abomination" instead of "abominable destroyer", keeping the word "abomination" as a noun and "desolate" or "destroy" as the verb. Of course, the meaning is very similar both ways. And he should have omitted all references to eagles, standards, and idols. I will explain in the next chapter how the phrase "abomination of desolation" could mean armies with or without idols.

To me, it is tempting to think that the masculine participle in Mark is correct, that it should be translated "he", and that it refers to the prince of the people mentioned in Daniel 9:26. A leader can be said to do what his followers do at his command.

Matthew 14:3 Douay says that "Herod had apprehended John and bound him and put him in prison". But he probably didn't literally do those things with his own hands. He sent his soldiers to do them with their hands. Thus Mark 6:17 Douay says: "For Herod himself had sent and apprehended John, and bound him in prison … ." Mark didn't say who was "sent", but it was probably Herod's soldiers. The Gospel of John uses a metonymy in John 4:1 (Douay): "When therefore Jesus understood that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus maketh more disciples, and baptizeth *more* than John." The next verse clarifies the figure of speech: "(Though Jesus *himself* did not baptize, but his disciples)". But Luke didn't see any merit in this idea of mine about Dan. 9:26. Luke definitely thinks that the abomination of desolation is an army, not a man, not their leader.

## The Abomination of Desolation Stands and Tramples Like a Beast.

Luke knew that the abomination of desolation that Jesus referred to was the one of Daniel 9:26-27, and was the same as the fourth kingdom of Daniel 2, and also the same as the fourth beast of Daniel 7. Whether the fourth beast of Daniel 7 is construed as a king or a kingdom, it is permissible for Luke to call the beast "armies" by metonymy.

Daniel 7:7 and 25 were rephrased in Daniel 9:26-27. Those passages were rephrased again in Luke 21:20-24. I added bold type, brackets, and angular quotation marks to show corresponding parts of the verses:

- **Daniel 7:7** (ASV) says: … **a fourth beast**, terrible and powerful, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet … .
- **Daniel 7:23-25** (ASV) says: **The fourth beast** … shall tread it down, and break it in pieces … . And **he** shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out «the saints of the Most High»; and he shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand [until a time and times and half a time].
- **Daniel 9:26-27** (Douay) reads: And after sixty two weeks Christ shall be slain: and the people that shall deny him shall not be his. And **a people with their leader that shall come**, shall destroy «the city and the sanctuary»: and the

end thereof shall be waste, and after the end of the war the appointed desolation. And he shall confirm the covenant with many, in one week: and in the half of the week the victim and the sacrifice shall fail: and there shall be in the temple **the abomination of desolation**: and the desolation [shall continue even to the consummation, and to the end].

- **Luke 21:20-24** (Douay) says: And when you shall see «Jerusalem» compassed about with **an army**: then know that the desolation thereof is at hand. Then let them that are in Judea flee to the mountains: and let them that are in the midst thereof, depart out: and let not them that are in the countries, enter into it. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things may be fulfilled that are written. But wo to them that are with child, and give suck in those days; for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword: and shall be led away captives into all nations: and «Jerusalem» shall be trodden down **by the Gentiles**: [till the times of the nations be fulfilled].

All the passages above are about a gentile army destroying Jerusalem for a certain duration of time. Daniel 9:26 and Daniel 9:27 are nearly synonymous, even though it is hard to see because of the figurative language. None of the passages is about the Antichrist or idolatry.

## In What Sense Was the Abomination Abominable?

The beast was abominable because it was gentile.

Gen. 43:32 says that the Egyptians refused to eat bread with the Hebrews "for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians". So an action can be scripturally called an abomination. Certain unclean foods are called abominations in Leviticus 11 (ASV). Gen. 46:34 says: "… for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians." So despised human beings themselves are sometimes called "abominations". 1 Samuel 13:4 says: "… Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines", meaning that Israel was hated, repulsive, or abhorred by the Philistines. Luke 16:15 almost defines the word, although using a figure of speech:

> And he said unto them, Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

That is, to hold in abomination, or to regard as an abomination, is the opposite of to be exalted among men, or in idiomatic English, the opposite of to be regarded highly.

Because of reasons in this and later chapters, I think that the fourth beast and the armies it symbolized were called an abomination simply because they were despised gentiles, not because the fourth beast resembled a boar, and not because the beast and the gentiles were terrifying or loathsome in appearance or behavior.

Unclean foods could be called abominations (Lev. 11 ASV). God told Peter to eat unclean foods in Acts 10 and specified in verse 12: "… all manner of fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth and birds of the heaven." God was conditioning him to socialize with an unclean gentile, Cornelius. In Acts 10:28, Peter says:

> … Ye yourselves know how it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come unto one of another nation; and *yet* unto me hath God showed that I should not call any man common or unclean:

## Gentiles and Wild Beasts That Devour and Trample.

Wild beasts that tread vegetation underfoot and devastate land symbolize gentile armies in Isaiah 5 and Psalm 80, not just in Daniel 7 and Mark 13.

The Jews believed that the boar out of the wood of Psalm 80:13 (79:14 Douay) represented the fourth beast of Daniel 7, and also the Roman empire. Some Latin writers mentioned this. Jerome's commentary on Daniel 7:7 says:

> Satisque miror, quod quum supra leaenam, & ursum, & pardum, in tribus regnis posuerit, Romanum regnum nulli bestiae compararit: nisi forte ut formidoslosam faceret bestiam, vocabulum tacuit, ut quidquid ferocius cogitaverimus in bestiis, hoc Romanos intelligamus. Hoc quod hic tacitum est, Hebraei in Psalmis dictum putant: *Devastavit eam aper de silva; & singularis ferus depastus est eam.*[6]

Which I translate:

> I am very surprised that even though he reckoned the lioness and the bear and the leopard as three kingdoms, he didn't compare the Roman kingdom to any beast, unless perhaps he left the name [of the beast] unstated in order to

6 From Jerome's commentary on Daniel in volume 5 of the Vallarsi edition. See bibliography.

make the beast fear-inspiring, so that whatever we have thought very fierce among beasts, we would understand that [as] the Romans. That which was left unstated here, the Hebrews think [was] stated in the Psalms: "The boar out of the wood laid it waste; and a singular wild beast devoured it."

Jerome said that the boar out of the wood of the Psalm was the Roman army in his commentary on Isaiah 27:10[7]:

> Ibi pascetur vitulus, Romanus exercitus, de quo & in alio loco sub nomine apri dictum est: *Vastabit eam aper de silva: & singularis ferus depastus est eam* (Psal. LXXIX, 14).

Which I translate:

> There the calf will feed, the Roman army, concerning which it was also said in another passage, [symbolized] by the noun boar: "The boar out of the wood will lay it waste: and a singular wild beast hath devoured it."

Paschasius Radbertus[8] also wrote that the boar out of the wood was "exercitus Romanorum sub Tito et Vespasiano", that is, "the army of the Romans under Titus and Vespasian". Notice that Radbertus and also Jerome (in his commentary on Isaiah) said that the boar was the Roman army, not the Roman Empire or a Roman king. Remember that Luke said that the abomination of desolation was armies, not a king or kingdom. And I say in this book that the abomination of desolation was a beast, an abominable desolating beast, namely, the fourth beast of Daniel 7.

Some reference works, despite teaching that the fourth beast originally referred to the Greeks, acknowledge that the Jews later understood it as Rome. The Jewish Encyclopedia of 1909, in its article on “Revelation“, says that the identification of Rome with the fourth beast of Daniel and with the boar out of the wood of Psalm 80 began in the time of Pompey[9].

Christian David Ginsburg explained the ambiguity of Psalm 80:13 in Hebrew. Citing the Talmud and the Midrashim, he said that the Hebrew text could be read two ways,

---

7 *Commentariorum S. Hieronymi In Isaiam Prophetam*, from Vol 4. of *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Stridonensis Presbyteri Operum*, by Dominic Vallarsi (Verona, 1736).

8 From *Expositio in Matthaeum* in Migne PL 120.

9 "Revelation", an article in The Jewish Encyclopedia. Isidore Singer (editor). Volume 10 Philipson-Samoscz. (New York and London, 1909). Digitized by Google.

meaning "swine of the river" (probably meaning "hippopotamus"), or else "swine from the forest" (meaning "boar"). He said:

> It was under the Roman occupation of Palestine and the Roman oppression of the Jews that the alternative reading חזיר מיער *swine of the forest*, became more popular. The Boar was the military sign of the Roman legions and though Marius afterwards introduced the Eagle, the Boar still continued as the sign in some legions and especially of the army which was quartered in Palestine. The Romans then became as repulsive to the Jews as the swine and the חזיר מיער *the Boar*, the symbol of Rome not only became the more acceptable reading, but was regarded as identical with the iron yoke of Roman tyranny.[10]

R. H. Charles said that the beast in Revelation 13 was the Roman Empire, and that its description is based on Daniel 7:2-7. After naming numerous ancient sources, he said:

> From the above survey, therefore, we conclude that from 30 A.D. onwards Jewish exegesis universally and Christian exegesis generally took the Roman Empire to be the fourth kingdom of Daniel.[11]

Jesus and Luke knew that the fourth beast originally signified the Roman army when the Book of Daniel was written. The three references cited above show that Jesus's Jewish audience probably understood him as referring to Rome, not Greece.

McClintock and Strong explained how devastating a wild beast can be in a field (Vol. 1, 1883, under the entry **Boar**):

> … It is passive while unmolested, but vindictive and fierce when roused. … The wild boar roots up the ground in a different manner from the common hog; the one turns up the earth in little spots here and there, the other ploughs it up like a furrow, and does irreparable damage in the cultivated lands of the farmer, destroying the roots of the vine and other plants. "The chief abode of the wild boar," says Forbes, in his *Oriental Memoirs*, "is in the

---

10 Introduction to the Massoretico-critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible, by Christian D. Ginsburg (London, 1897).

11 A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John, etc., by R. H. Charles, Vol. 1 of 2 (New York, 1920).

forests and jungles; but when the grain is nearly ripe, he commits great ravages in the fields and sugar plantations. The powers that subverted the Jewish nation are compared to the wild boar, and the wild beast of the field, by which the vine is wasted and devoured; and no figure could be more happily chosen (Psa. lxxx, 13). That ferocious and destructive animal, not satisfied with devouring the fruit, lacerates and breaks with his sharp tusks the branches of the vine, or with his snout digs it up by the roots and tramples it under his feet."

Isaiah 5:5-6 says:

> And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: and I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor hoed; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

I will quote below from a commentary on those verses. It also refers to Psalm 80:12-13, a psalm of Asaph, which uses similar figures. After quoting Deut. 31:17, in which God threatened to forsake Israel and to let the Israelites be devoured if they broke his covenant, MacCulloch wrote[12]:

> Asaph, contemplating the forlorn state of this vineyard, when this threatening received a partial accomplishment, thus complains: 'Why hast thou broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her. The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.'

MacCulloch continued:

> *It shall be eaten up – and it shall be trodden down.* These expressions plainly foretold in what manner the Jewish nation were to be treated by their enemies; some of whom were to be greedily devoured, whilst others should

12 Lectures On the Prophecies of Isaiah, Volume 1, by Robert MacCulloch (London, 1791). Even though Isaiah chapter 5 is addressed to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the men of Judah in verse 3, verse 7 also mentions the house of Israel. So MacCulloch thought Isaiah 5 foretold the destruction of both Judah and Ephraim. MacCulloch refers to the later Roman desolation of Judea, too. Jerome thought that Isaiah 5:26 applied only to the Romans.

> be trampled upon with indignation, and trodden down in triumph, as a proof of their subjection to foreign power. And thus it actually came to pass, when, on account of their multiplied transgressions, God deprived that people of their defence, and exposed them to the hostile attacks of their powerful enemies. The Assyrians fell upon Ephraim; the Babylonians attacked Judah: they laid waste their land, they demolished their fortresses, they burnt their temple, and led them away captive into strange countries, until they found, in woful experience, what an evil and bitter thing it was, that they had forsaken the Lord their God. And afterward these predictions were more fully verified, when the Romans carried devastation through the whole land, and both consumed and trod them down, until destruction came upon them to the uttermost.

Isaiah didn't specify the animal that would lay waste and tread down God's vineyard. But any farmer would probably have thought first of a boar because it both eats and treads. Fittingly, MacCulloch cited Psalm 80, one of the Psalms of Asaph, which does specify that the boar was one of the animals that devastated God's vineyard. Elsewhere in this book I explain that in the Bible "son of man" frequently means "man", when opposed to other species of animals or angels. You need to understand this to understand Psalm 80, which contrasts boars and wild beasts with God's people, who are also called “the son of man”. This Psalm calls foreigners wild beasts and boars (as well as enemies and neighbors). But Israel is, in contrast, called a human being, as well as a flock. This is the same dichotomy of creatures used in Daniel 7. "One like a son of man" (= "resembling a human being") was contrasted with four creatures that looked like beasts. Israelites were human beings but everybody else was a wild animal, an unclean gentile.

MacCulloch said above that the boar out of the wood in the Psalm, and also the unnamed beast in Isaiah 5, trampled God's vineyard. And he said that this language was a metaphor for the figurative trampling of Jerusalem by foreign enemies. The gentiles in Luke 21:24 are the armies mentioned in Luke 21:20. Luke 21:24 says:

> And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations: and Jerusalem shall be <u>trodden down</u> of the <u>Gentiles</u>, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

An army can indeed tread with their feet, literally or metaphorically. But the words "trodden down" in Luke 21:24 are probably an allusion to the beast of Daniel 7:23-25.

People don't fear literal treading by an army. They are afraid of their weapons. But farmers do fear the treading by boars.

According to Daniel 7:7, Daniel saw:

> … a fourth beast, terrible and powerful, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

This beast ate and trampled everything like boars. Even though the comparison would have been suitable, I doubt that the fourth beast looked like a boar. The boar is a good symbol of unclean people. But there is no Scriptural necessity that gentiles always be symbolized by boars. Boars devastate and trample. But the fourth beast in Dan. 7 was described as some different beast that also devastated and trampled. The first three beasts were compared to a lion (or, lioness LXX and Vulgate), a bear, and a leopard. I take it that the fourth beast didn't look enough like any beast Daniel had ever seen. If the fourth beast had looked like a boar, Daniel would have said so.

Some writers say that the Romans had an image of a boar carved on one of the gates of Jerusalem. Their source is Jerome's Latin translation of Eusebius's Chronicon. One printed edition of this is Joseph Scaliger's[13]. The clause in question is "sus scalptus in marmore", meaning "[there is] a hog carved in marble" or something similar. A *sus* is a domestic hog or sow, not a boar. The word for "boar" in Latin is *aper*. English mistranslations of the word in this passage are indefensible. Combining what Jerome said in his commentaries on Isaiah and Daniel, quoted above, the *aper de silva*, "the boar out of the wood" of the Psalm, was the Roman army, the Roman kingdom, and also the fourth beast of Daniel 7. The standard of some Roman legions was a hog at certain times. Maybe the marble carving on the gate represented one of those legions. But it wasn't an allusion to boars in the Bible.

I don't mean to suggest that Jesus accepted all the opinions that I quoted in this chapter. Jesus believed that the abomination of desolation was the fourth beast, and that it was the Roman army. Jesus used a figure of speech from Isaiah 5:30. But I

---

13 *Thesaurus Temporum, Eusebii Pamphili Caesareae Palaestinae Episcopi, Chronicorum Canonum Omnimodae Historiae Libri Duo, Interprete Hieronymo* (Amsterdam, 1658). Volume 2 of 2. Joseph Scaliger edition.

don't know if Jesus considered Isaiah 5 to have been written about the Roman army. And I don't know how Jesus interpreted the boar out of the wood in the Psalm.

## What Does the Phrase "Of Desolation" Mean?

Luke substituted the word "armies" for "abomination of desolation". I have shown that gentiles are abominable and therefore abominations. The phrase "of desolation" is ambiguous. What did it mean? Did it mean that the abominable army desolates, or that it was doomed to be desolated? Or did it mean that it was something that cursed Jerusalem to desolation, like an idol or other sin? Luke answers that question in verse 20 by saying:

> But when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand.

He began the answer by saying that the abomination is armies, not idols. And he says that Jerusalem will be desolated. By what? By the armies he just mentioned. They are armies of desolation, desolating armies, armies that desolate. And he continues in the next few verses to unmistakably confirm that he is talking about a siege by gentile armies.

The idea that the abomination was something like idolatry which can't desolate by itself, but which provokes God to desolate is common. Their words may be better than mine, so I will quote an explanation of this idea from McClintock and Strong's article under the heading **Abomination** (Volume 1, 1883). Notice the phrases in the quotation which I underlined:

> A still more important difference among commentators, as to the meaning of the expression in question, has respect to the point, whether the abomination, <u>which somehow should carry along with it the curse of desolation</u>, ought to be understood of the idolatrous and corrupt practices <u>which should inevitably draw down desolating inflictions of vengeance</u>, or of the heathen powers and weapons of war that should be the immediate instruments of executing them. The following are the reasons assigned for understanding the expression of the former: 1. By far the most common use of the term *abomination* or *abominations*, when referring to spiritual things, and especially to things involving severe judgments and sweeping desolation,

> is in respect to idolatrous and other foul corruptions. It was the pollution of the first temple, or the worship connected with it by such things, which in a whole series of passages is described as the abominations that provoked God to lay it in ruins (2 Kings xxi, 2-13; Jer. vii, 10-14; Ezek. v, 11; Ezek. vii, 8-9, 20-23). And our Lord very distinctly intimated, by referring on another occasion to some of these passages, that as the same wickedness substantially was lifting itself up anew, the same retributions of evil might certainly be expected to chastise them (Matt. xxi, 13).

Notice the words I underlined above to understand the concept of the phrase "of desolation" meaning "carrying the curse of desolation". Idolatry and corrupt practices don't actually desolate, but they can provoke God, who then inspires some other agent, like an army or a plague, to desolate. But, however reasonable that interpretation might seem, Luke was NOT talking about that kind of abomination or that kind of desolation. He made it clear that the desolation was inflicted, not by a curse, but by the "weapons of war" of a "heathen power" (to borrow expressions from the quotation above). Luke explained emphatically and repeatedly, to the alert reader anyway, in Luke 19 and 21 and 23, that "of desolation" meant "performing desolation" in what might have been the worst siege of a city in history.

The article brought up the idea that the word "abomination" usually pertains to something spiritual in the Bible, especially idolatry. The observation is correct, but the conclusion is wrong. I deal with that in another chapter. The article suggests that the desolation of the temple in 70 A.D. was for the same reason as the desolation of Solomon's temple. Despite the attractiveness of the idea, the destruction of Herod's temple was not a fulfillment of the curses in Deuteronomy as in the case of the first temple. I discuss that elsewhere.

## Applying the Above Lessons to Common Misinterpretations.

I will quote part of a long article from the Catholic Encyclopedia below[14] because it does a good job of summarizing popular interpretations. I am only quoting part of it:

> The expression itself is confessedly obscure. To determine its meaning, interpreters have naturally betaken themselves to the original Hebrew of the

14 The article under the entry: "**Abomination of Desolation, THE**"

> book of Daniel; for our first Evangelist distinctly says that "the abomination of desolation" he has in view "was spoken of by Daniel the prophet"; and further, the expression he makes use of, in common with St. Mark, is simply the Greek phrase whereby the Septuagint translators rendered literally the Hebrew words *shiqquc shomem* found in Daniel, xii, 11; ix, 27; xi, 31.

Yes, the expression is the same as the one in Daniel 12:11, 9:27, and 11:31 in the LXX. And I say that interpreters should not be wearing themselves out studying the original Hebrew of the book of Daniel to understand this expression, because Luke already explained it for them. They should be studying Luke. Our gospels of Mark and Matthew have the Septuagint reading. Luke read those gospels, and he explained the meaning of the Greek expression in the Greek language, changing a metaphor to prose and inserting exegetical comments. It was the meaning that Jesus thought was in the original Hebrew text. The encyclopedia continues:

> Unfortunately, despite all their efforts to explain these Hebrew terms, Biblical scholars are still at variance [about] their precise meaning. While most commentators regard the first "*shiqquc*", usually rendered by "abomination", as designating anything (statue, altar, etc.) that pertains to idolatrous worship, others take it to be a contemptuous designation of a heathen god or idol.

But I say that Luke explained that the abomination is a gentile army, not an idol. And Luke didn't bother to discuss the Hebrew text. The article continues:

> Again, while most commentators render the second "*shomem*" by the abstract word "desolation", others treat it as a concrete form referring to a person, "a ravager", or even as a participial noun meaning "that maketh desolate".

There is no need to be confused by the ambiguities of the Hebrew text. Luke gave the answer. Luke called the abomination of desolation "armies". And he explicitly described the desolation in parts of Luke 19, 21, and 23: there would be a siege and Jerusalem would be desolated so badly that not a stone would be left on a stone. There would be starvation and cannibalism. Babies would die. The survivors would be led captive to idolatrous countries. So the abomination of desolation is the armies that were predicted to desolate (Jerusalem). A little later the article says:

> While thus disagreeing as to the precise sense of the Hebrew phrase usually rendered by "the abomination of desolation", Christian scholars are practically at one with regard to its general meaning. They commonly admit, and indeed rightly, that the Hebrew expression must needs be understood of some idolatrous emblem, the setting up of which would entail the ultimate desolation of the Temple of Jerusalem (I Mach., i, 57; iv, 38). And with this general meaning in view, they proceed to determine the historical event between Our Lord's prediction and the ruin of the Temple (A. D. 70), which should be regarded as "the abomination of desolation" spoken of in St. Matthew, xxiv, 15, and St. Mark, xiii, 14.

Yes, that is what scholars do. But they are wrong and should have studied Luke instead of the Hebrew text. Luke defined the abomination as gentile armies, and he explicitly described the desolation. 1 Maccabees was cited in the article, and it is usually cited by commentators, but it has nothing to do with Jesus's interpretation. Neither do idols. I will discuss these things later. The article continues:

> But here they are again divided. Many scholars have thought, and still think, that the introduction of the Roman standards into the Holy Land, and more particularly into the Holy City, shortly before the destruction of the Temple, is the event foretold by Our Lord to His disciples as the signal for their flight from Judea. It is true that the standards were worshipped by the Roman soldiers and abhorred by the Jews as the emblem of Roman idolatry. Yet they can hardly be considered as the "the abomination of desolation" referred to in St. Matthew, xxiv, 15. The Evangelist says that this "abomination" is to stand in the "holy place", whereby is naturally meant the Temple (see also Daniel, ix, 27, where the Vulgate reads: "there shall be in the Temple the abomination of the desolation"), and the Roman standards were actually introduced into the Temple only after it had been entered by Titus, that is, too late to serve as a warning for the Christians of Judea.

Christian scholars have gone astray by insisting that the abomination has to be an idol. Luke said it was gentile armies. And Luke said that the gentile armies were going to do the desolating. Scholars mention Roman soldiers as if they carry the abomination of desolation. But the soldiers are the abomination, with or without idols and standards, and the soldiers did the desolating. Luke revealed that Jesus didn't

give any signal for Christians to escape. That's another misinterpretation. I will cover the meaning of "the holy place" later. Next the article says:

> Other scholars are of the mind that the desecration of the Temple by the Zealots who seized it and made it their stronghold shortly before Jerusalem was invested by Titus, is the event foretold by Our Lord. But this view is commonly rejected for the simple reason that "the abomination of desolation" spoken of by Daniel and referred to in St. Matthew's Gospel, was certainly something connected with idolatrous worship.

I say again: Luke said that the abomination of desolation was gentile armies. He didn't say anything about idolatrous worship. Nor did Jesus. The article continues and mentions the theory that the attempt to install Caligula's statue in the temple about 40 A.D. was referred to as the abomination of desolation, which theory is also wrong.

## Mark 13:14 and Matthew 24:16 Are Addressed to Unbelievers.

In section 150 of Book 2 of The Harmony of the Gospels, Augustine of Hippo expressed confusion about Luke 21:21. He wouldn't have made the comment if he had understood what Luke meant. Augustine said:

> How does this third evangelist say here, "let them depart out," when he has already used these terms: "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with an army"? … the difficulty is to see how those who are in the midst of it are to depart out, when the city is already compassed with an army.[15]

Earlier, I quoted from an encyclopedia that mentioned the theory that the Roman standards were a signal for Christians to flee to Pella. Here is a longer quotation about that subject from the article under the entry **Pella** in McClintock and Strong (Volume 7, 1894):

> But what makes Pella specially interesting is the fact that it formed the refuge and home of the Christians of Jerusalem during the siege and

15 "The Harmony of the Four Gospels", From A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, edited by Philip Schaff. Volume VI. Saint Augustin: Sermon on the Mount, Harmony of the Gospels, Homilies on the Gospels. (New York, 1888.)

> destruction of that city by the Romans (see Baier, *De Christianorum migratione in Pellam*, Jen. 1694). The disciples had been directed by their divine Master to "flee into the mountains" (Matt. xxiv, 16), and to this place in the mountains of Gilead, we are told, they retired (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* iii, 5). … In the early ages of Christianity, Pella became an episcopal city, but it seems to have been destroyed, at or immediately after the conquest of Syria by the Saracens (Reland, *Palaest*. p. 924 sq.).

But I object to the interpretation above. I say that Jesus never directed the disciples to flee to the mountains. The Catholic Encyclopedia further explains the tradition about Christians fleeing from Jerusalem in its article under the heading **Pella**:

> As a part of the kingdom of Agrippa it offered in A. D. 66 a safe refuge to the little Christian community of Mount Sion who, under the leadership of St. Simeon, took refuge there during the revolt of the Jews, and the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans (Eusebius, "H.E.", III, v; Epiphanius, "Haer.", xxix, 7). When, after three years of war and massacres, the second Jewish revolt had been suppressed by Rome (132-5), and the Emperor Adrian had rebuilt Jerusalem under the name of "Aelia Capitolina", a part of the community living at Pella re-established themselves by order of the uncircumcised bishop, Mark, on Mount Sion.

As the encyclopedia says, a lot of Christian tradition originated in the writings of Eusebius and Epiphanius. There is a lot about this Christian tradition in the book by J.B. Cartwright called *The Church of St. James. The Primitive Hebrew Christian Church of Jerusalem; Its History, Character, and Constitution* (London, 1842). But I am contradicting ecclesiastical tradition and saying that the gospels didn't record any prophecy that Christians should flee from Jerusalem at some signal, or flee to Pella. The command in Mark 13:14 and the similar passages in Matthew and Luke are exhortations addressed to all of those Judeans against whom the vengeance of God was going to come. Those words weren't spoken in the second person to his apostles, who were present, nor were they spoken to future Jerusalemite Christians. But the words were spoken to an unbelieving audience which was not present. Verses 15 and 16 of Mark 13 were moved to Luke 17, because they apply to all believers who were to be saved, and not only to believers in Jerusalem. Mark 13:17 is talking about Jerusalem again, so it describes the woes to women with children. In severe sieges in

ancient times, if the siege wasn't lifted, and if the besieged people didn't surrender, the besieged would see the children starve to death.

Luke detected something wrong with Mark 13:14-17:

> But when ye see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not (let him that readeth understand), then **let them that are in Judaea flee unto the mountains**: and let him that is on the housetop not go down, nor enter in, to take anything out of his house: and let him that is in the field not return back to take his cloak. **But woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days!**

The words that are underlined above are authentic words of Jesus. But they were spoken on another occasion, not during Jesus's prophecy about the destruction of the temple. After removing the verses that didn't belong, Luke added explanatory comments of his own, comments probably not spoken by Jesus, comments not found in Mark or Matthew, while writing Luke 21:20-23. If Jesus's words had originally applied to Christians, Luke would have added different comments to make it clear. Below, I put the words that Luke kept from Mark 13:14 and 17, words which were really spoken during Jesus's speech about the time of the destruction of the temple, in bold. And I underline the exegetical comments that Luke inserted:

> But when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand. **Then let them that are in Judaea flee unto the mountains;** and let them that are in the midst of her depart out; and let not them that are in the country enter therein. For these are days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. **Woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days!** for there shall be great distress upon the land, and wrath unto this people.

Luke's comments underlined above occupy the place of the words that Luke moved to the 17th chapter. But they are not a substitute for those words. These words were intended to prevent the reader from misunderstanding the exhortation to the Judeans. Fleeing to the mountains is the opposite of entering within the city walls of Jerusalem. The Roman armies would bring vengeance. Those armies wouldn't be defeated by an angel as in the time of Hezekiah and Sennacherib. The armies weren't going to leave a stone upon a stone in that temple that impressed the apostles so much. The women and children would suffer all the misfortunes brought by successful sieges. Compare

Luke 19:43-44, which is also about the predicted destruction of Jerusalem, and which also is silent about what would happen to Christians. John Chrysostom thought that the abomination of desolation was the Roman armies. And he understood the corresponding section of Matthew similarly to how I do. In his homily on Matthew 24:16-18, which I will mention again a little later, he said[16]:

> Flee therefore then, saith He, for thenceforth there is no hope of safety for you. For since it had fallen out, that they often had recovered themselves in grievous wars, as under Sennacherib, under Antiochus again (for when at that time also, armies had come in upon them, and the temple had been seized beforehand, the Maccabees rallying gave their affairs an opposite turn); in order then that they might not now also suspect this, that there would be any such change, He forbids them all thought of the kind.

Luke moved the words about the salvation of Christians in Mark to another section of Luke about the days of Lot (Luke 17:28-32 ASV), which words are in bold below. I will underline the references to Lot that enclose these words:

> Likewise even as it came to pass <u>in the days of Lot</u>; they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but in the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all: after the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed. In that day, **he that shall be on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not go down to take them away: and let him that is in the field likewise not return back**. <u>Remember Lot's wife</u>.

Luke removed those words about the man on the housetop and the man in the field from Luke 21, and put them in another speech where they belonged, in Luke 17, in a speech which discussed the coming of the Son of Man and the salvation of believers. And he left only words pertaining to the doomed unbelievers in Luke 21:21-27. It is not by chance that the verses in that section of Luke 21 are all in the third person. They are all about those who rejected the Son of Man. Not by accident, the second-person verbs used for the four apostles, which ceased after verse 20, resume in verse 28. Jesus was not telling the Christians how to save themselves in the section of his

---

16 From the book, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, edited by Philip Schaff. Volume X. Saint Chrysostom: "Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew". (New York, 1888). "Homily LXXVI: Matt. XXIV. 16-18.".

speech with verbs in the third person. When the disciples saw the Roman armies besieging Jerusalem, the apostles were simply to know that the **desolation** of Jerusalem was near, **not its salvation** as happened in the days of Sennacherib. Jesus expected his apostles to **know** that. He didn't tell them to **flee**. He didn't suggest that they would be inside Jerusalem when they saw the armies. If not for Jesus's prediction, their natural instinct, like the instinct of any Judean, would have been to flee within the walls of Jerusalem for safety.

Luke gave a lot of thought to his use of Mark and Matthew. He knew that Jesus's statements about the one on the housetop and in the field were in the context of the destruction of Sodom. The clauses removed from Mark are enclosed between references to "the days of Lot" (17:28) and to Lot's wife (17:32). Lot's wife looked back and became a pillar of salt. Something similar would happen when "the Son of man is revealed", if the man on the housetop or in the field did not strictly obey the saving angels and went back into his house to get his goods.

Mark 13:15-16 does not tell Christian believers to look for some sign (like the abomination of desolation) before fleeing. These dislocated words belonged to a speech in which Christians are told that the Son of Man will save them in a miraculous manner similar to the salvation of Lot and his family. You don't need a sign when an angel confronts you and tells you to flee. Lot's wife is the type; Christians who fail to obey the angels and lose salvation are the antitype. And they are told to flee without hesitation, keeping in mind the story of Lot's family. Luke 17 mentions Noah[17] and Lot. Neither Noah nor Lot looked for a sign. Jesus's words about the man on the housetop and in the field may have been inspired by the fact that Lot didn't immediately obey the angels. Genesis 19:16 ASV reads:

> But he lingered; and the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters … .

The miraculous salvation promised in Luke 17 is briefly mentioned again in Luke 21:28, where the verbs change from the third person to the second person.

**Judea and Jerusalem should be understood literally, without qualification, without subauding an imagined ellipsis, in Mark 13:14 and Luke 21:20-21.** The

---

17 Gen. 7:1, 5: And Jehovah said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. … And Noah did according unto all that Jehovah commanded him.

clauses below were explanatory comments added by Luke to explain the original meaning of the statement from Mark which he had just quoted, that is, to explain "let them that are in Judaea flee unto the mountains":

> and let them that are in the midst of her depart out; and let not them that are in the country enter therein.

The pronoun "her" refers to Jerusalem in verse 20, not to Judaea. Luke said that Jerusalem was going to be besieged. "Them that are in the country" means the Judeans of verse 21, who would normally enter Jerusalem for safety when foreign armies threatened. No more meaning should be interjected: not "those Christians who are in Jerusalem", but "those who are in Jerusalem"; not "those Christians who are in Judea", but "those who are in Judea"; not "those Christians who are in the country", but "those who are in the country". This was an exhortation for all Jerusalemites and all Judeans to flee because neither the walls of Jerusalem nor God would protect them from the siege. They aren't given the hope of angelic deliverance by the Son of Man like the Christians (Luke 17). The exhortation was not addressed to the Christians of Jerusalem any more than the prophecies against Jerusalem in Luke 19:41-44 and 23:28-30. If Jesus's command about fleeing to the mountains ever had any additional meaning, like fleeing to Pella, Luke would have explained it. The clauses about fleeing to the mountains, fleeing from the midst of Jerusalem, and not entering into Jerusalem are nearly synonymous. They all mean: "Jerusalem is doomed, so get out." And "fleeing to the mountains" may be a figure of speech like the words of Luke 23:30: "Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us." I don't know if that is the case, but if so, it is a mistake to try to identify the mountains Jesus was speaking about.

**The clause about fleeing to the mountains was in the imperative mood in Greek and is hard to translate into English.** Jesus gave his end-times discourse to four apostles (Mark 13:3). In Mark 13:14, Jesus says to those four: "let them that are in Judaea flee unto the mountains." What is the sense of the verb? The words could be construed incorrectly in English. The English reader shouldn't imagine that the word "let" is a synonym for "permit". That is, Jesus was not saying: "Peter, James, John, Andrew, when that time comes, I insist that the four of you permit the Judean Christians under your oversight to flee to the mountains." Also, the Greek verb is in the third person, not in the second person, as it would have been if spoken as a command to the four apostles.

Third-person exhortations are confusing. They don't seem to make sense. How can you exhort somebody who isn't present? Because of the importance of Luke 21:21, I have to digress. I don't know much Greek grammar, so I will rely mainly on English Bible translations from Greek, on context, on the testimony of John Chrysostom, and on public-domain conjugations of Greek verbs.

Third-person imperatives are common in the Bible. They make sense in law. A law can be written in the second person. And it can be written in the third person with this formula: "If anybody …, let him … ." Legal language assumes that people who are not even present will hear or read the law, even years in the future. For example, Leviticus 20:10 (Douay) states a law in the third person: "If any man commit adultery with the wife of another, and defile his neighbour's wife, let them be put to death, both the adulterer and the adulteress." This law could have been rewritten in the second person: "Put to death any adulterer and adulteress." Exodus 20:14 has a similar law in the second person: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." A command that is spoken in the second person can be rephrased in the third person. That is true of this kind of legal command, and it is also true of the non-legal third-person imperative commands in Luke 21:21. The Greek verb *θανατουσθωσαν* in the Septuagint, which means "let them be put to death" in the verse above, is a third-person imperative.

It is not necessary to study Greek grammars to understand the passages under discussion. Luke used the third-person imperative enough for the English reader to understand the meaning from the context of his gospel. I will cover this later.

Bible verses with third-person commands are usually translated with a formula of words like "*let him* + verb". This formula has been usually used for English translations from both Greek and Latin. And Latin grammars usually use that formula. I don't know the history of that usage in English. Some translations of Luke 21:21 say "he must" instead of "let him". Maybe the translators regarded "let him" as archaic or as not even a true imperative. Luke 21:21 has three third-person imperatives. The person of the verb is important, because it shows that the commands weren't directed to the apostles who heard Jesus. Yet some translations insert the word "you" as if they were. That is wrong and hides the important fact that second-person verbs are missing in Luke 21:21-27, being replaced by third-person verbs. I will later show that Chrysostom would object to those translations. I think that a translator is justified in changing "let him" to "he must", because it doesn't change the meaning much if at all. The translator

in this case keeps close to the original by using a third-person verb with a helping verb to make the verb imperative.

Adam Clarke thought that Matthew 24:16 (which corresponds to Mark 13:14) was Jesus's counsel to his followers. He wrote: "This counsel was remembered and wisely followed by the Christians afterwards." In comments on Matthew 24:20, he called it an order: "Our Lord had ordered his followers to make their escape from Jerusalem when they should see it encompassed with armies … ."[18] He and others have thought that Luke 21:21 meant: "Then those [future Christians] who are in Judea must flee to the mountains." At least three modern translators incorrectly paraphrase Luke 21:21 in the second person something like this: "If you are a Christian in Judea at that time, flee to the mountains." This kind of paraphrase perpetuates the wrong interpretation of the verse that has prevailed at least since Augustine.

Verses 35-37 of Luke 23 show the meaning of the third-person command. Luke 23:37 says that the soldiers mocked Jesus, saying (Douay): "… If thou be the king of the Jews, **save** thyself." In verse 39, one of the robbers said: "If thou be Christ, **save** thyself, and us." The word "save" in both verses 37 and 39 is in the second-person imperative. And they are translated into English in the imperative mood. Even though English doesn't have distinctive imperative conjugations, we recognize imperative verbs without any trouble from sentence structure. Luke 23:35 (Douay) says: "And the people stood beholding. And the rulers with them derided him, saying: He saved others: **let him save** [third-person imperative] himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God." People are talking **about** Jesus in verse 35, not to him like in the other two verses. So the person of the verb changes from second-person to third-person. Oddly, the people who are talking **about** Jesus are also talking **to** him according to the imperative mood of the verb. It seems strange to us that a third-person verb could be imperative. And it seemed strange to ancient Latin translators, so they used the third-person subjunctive. The logical basis for using the imperative in Greek must be that the people say about Jesus in the third-person what they would have said to him in the second-person if they had been in his presence. In Greek these verbs are all imperative. Nearly all translations read "let him save himself", or something very similar. A translation could read "he must [or, has to] save himself", since the helping-verb "must" imitates the imperative mood.

---

18 The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, etc., by Adam Clarke. A New Edition. Volume I. - Matthew to The Acts. (New York, 1855).

According to online sources, the three Greek verbs in Luke 21:21 [φευγετωσαν (flee), *εκχωρειτωσαν* (depart out), and *εισερχεσθωσαν* (enter into)] are all third-person imperative verbs, just like Luke 23:35, which I mentioned above. Just as the rulers were talking about Jesus in Luke 23:35, not to him, so also in Luke 21:21 Jesus is talking about certain people in Judea, not to them. Luke 23:27-30 is about the siege of Jerusalem and alludes to Luke 21. Luke 23:28 reads in the Douay: "But Jesus turning to them, said: Daughters of Jerusalem, **weep** not over me; but **weep** for yourselves, and for your children." The word "weep" is second-person imperative like Luke 23:37 and 39, but the verb is plural in this case. If Jesus had been talking about them instead of to them, he would have used the third person and said something like "Let the daughters of Jerusalem weep for themselves and for their children", or "They must weep for themselves and for their children." Luke 23:27-30 alludes to the siege of Jerusalem by referring to future great suffering for women and children, and also by mentioning the hills. Compare Luke 21:20-24. Jesus spoke directly to Judean women who were going to suffer the vengeance of God in Luke 23, using the second-person imperative. He spoke about them in Luke 21, but using a woe-clause instead of an imperative[19].

Another interesting example is in Luke 16, where Abraham tells the rich man that his brethren should read Moses and the Prophets. The rich man was separated from his brethren by an enormous distance, since he was in Hades. I think that the verse is similar to Luke 21, where Jesus tells some apostles that certain people should flee, even though Jesus was separated from the people he was exhorting by distance and by decades of time. Luke 16:29 (Douay) reads: "And Abraham said to him: They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." Abraham said about them what he was unable to say to them. The clause traditionally translated "let them hear them" is grammatically a third-person command. But what does it mean to let somebody hopelessly far away hear Moses and the Prophets? The people being commanded weren't within earshot. The Greek verb is third-person imperative (*ακουσατωσαν*). Latin translators regularly used the third-person subjunctive to translate this Greek tense. But how can the verb be forced into the imperative in English? With the formula

19 Jesus addressed those women in the third person, but with a "woe unto them" clause instead of an imperative exhortation in Luke 21:23: "Woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days!" Jesus could have said: "Let them that are with child and that give suck in those days weep." That would correspond with what he said in the imperative to the women in Luke 23:28.

"let them hear" if it is understandable to modern readers. But I think it is not. Some newer translations say that the brethren "could", "should", or "must" listen to Moses and the Prophets. These modern translators know Greek, and they know that the Greek verb is imperative. The translations using auxiliary verbs that simulate the imperative mood in English are probably close to the original meaning.

In summary, Jesus spoke the words "let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains" to all Jews at the time of the Roman siege of Jerusalem, not to the believing Jews. The words weren't spoken as a command to the apostles who were present listening to Jesus. The way to understand the verse is to first imagine Jesus addressing the Judeans in the second person: "Then, Judeans, you had better flee to the mountains." Next imagine Jesus telling the apostles about the situation the Judeans would be in: "Then the Judeans will have to flee to the mountains." If Jesus had commanded his future disciples, he would have phrased a second-person command: "Then, [you] Judeans, flee to the mountains." The third-person imperatives in Luke 16 and Luke 23 throw light on Luke 21:21. Abraham's third-person command to the rich man's brothers, and also the rulers' third-person command to Jesus, both correspond to Jesus's third-person command to the Judeans.

John Chrysostom knew Greek. He thought that Matthew 24:16 (which corresponds to Mark 13:14) meant for the Jews to flee Judea, not the apostles, but for different reasons than mine. After referring to Matt. 24:15-21, he said:

> Seest thou that His discourse is addressed to the Jews, and that He is speaking of the ills that should overtake them? For the apostles surely were not to keep the Sabbath day, neither to be there, when Vespasian did those things. For indeed the most part of them were already departed this life. And if any was left, he was dwelling then in other parts of the world.[20]

The verbs in Mark 13:15-16 and in Luke 17:31 that are directed at Christians are also third-person imperative in Greek. Jesus did indeed give future Christians a command. It was in the third-person since it was a command to people who were not present when he was speaking. It was not a command to flee from Jerusalem. It was to obey the angels who were going to try to save them without hesitation.

Maybe some of traditional church history about the supernatural salvation of Christians from Jerusalem really happened. But it was not specifically prophesied in the Bible, whereas the destruction of Jerusalem was specifically prophesied. Jesus

---

20 See bibliography.

said in Luke 17 that the Son of Man would save the righteous from a doomed, wicked city like Sodom. In Luke 10:1-16, Jesus talks about salvation varying by city according to how the citizens of different cities had treated Christian disciples. It can be gathered from those verses that few if any from Chorazin and Bethsaida would be saved. But some from Tyre and Sidon would be. Accordingly, the Son of Man might have really sent angels into Jerusalem to save a few righteous Christians before the destruction of the city. Maybe so, maybe not. Maybe the Christians were already out of Jerusalem when it was besieged, and were spared the suffering. Or, keeping in mind the sufferings of the faithful predicted in Luke 21:8-19, maybe they suffered in Jerusalem and had to await the redemption (= deliverance) mentioned in Luke 21:28. Maybe the time that the Son of Man came in a cloud (Luke 21:27-28) was, all by itself, in one day, the time of salvation of the righteous as in the days of Noah and of Lot (Luke 17). Both secular and ecclesiastical history are unreliable, so we don't know what happened in the first century. Unrecorded wonderful angelic salvations might have occurred.

## Nestle's 1884 Theory Is Incompatible With Luke.

I previously quoted an article from an encyclopedia that briefly said that some believed that the abomination of desolation was a contemptuous designation of a heathen god or idol. That was a reference to Eberhard Nestle's article in a German magazine in 1884 that began a popular theory, which is that the Hebrew expression translated "abomination of desolation" (in Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11) was a deliberate misspelling and mispronunciation of the word or phrase for "Lord of Heaven", *Baal-samem*, a pagan god. Luke does not allow for that popular explanation. Here is a brief explanation of this theory in the article on "Abomination of Desolation" in Encyclopaedia Biblica:

> The phrase appears to be an intentional alteration of … (*Baal shamem*), 'heaven's lord.' That this was a current title of Zeus may be inferred from the Syriac of 2 Macc. $6_2$, where the temple at Jerusalem is called by the emissary of Antiochus 'the temple of *be'el shemin'* … The author of Daniel … contemptuously says, 'Call it not "heaven's lord," but "an appalling abomination"'; and the object to which he refers is an image of Olympian Zeus, which … the agents of Antiochus set up on the great altar … of burnt offerings.

Suppose you are angry with somebody named Dan and you call him Damn. That would be a disrespectful, punning, intentional mispronunciation of his name.

Some say that the expression "hocus pocus" is a disrespectful, intentional mispronunciation of Latin words from Matt. 26:26 in the Roman Catholic mass. Catholics believe in transubstantiation, that is, that the bread mysteriously becomes the body of Christ. So supposedly somebody hundreds of years ago said “hocus pocus” and performed a magic trick. And his audience knew that he was mocking the words *hoc est corpus* and the doctrine of transubstantion. John Tillotson wrote[21]:

> in all probability those common *juggling* words of *hocus pocus* are nothing else but a corruption of *hoc est corpus*, by way of ridiculous imitation of the Priests of the Church of *Rome* in their *trick of Transubstantiation*.

Likewise, Nestle's theory is that the Hebrew word that is translated "abomination of desolation" is a pun, not a phrase to be interpreted by the normal rules of language.

I am only interested in what Jesus of Nazareth and Luke thought that the abomination of desolation meant, not interpretations derived from 1 and 2 Maccabees. If "abomination of desolation" really had been an insulting misspelling of Baal-samen, or Lord of Heaven, then that is what Luke would have explained in his gospel. And he wouldn't have provided the definitions of "abomination" and of "desolation" that he actually did provide for the alert reader in Luke 21. But Luke shows that Daniel really meant each of the words that he wrote in the normal senses of the words. He really meant that there was an abomination that would desolate a holy place, because he defined “the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not” in Mark 13:14 as armies besieging and treading Jerusalem, performing "her desolation" according to the ASV, "the desolation thereof" according to the Douay (Luke 19:43-44 and 21:20-24). So Luke explained just what kind of abomination Daniel had meant, and just what kind of desolation he had meant, and what kind of place the abomination ought not stand in.

Even though Luke felt free to rewrite and correct other people's gospels and even to add explanatory comments, he didn't even hint at Baal or Zeus in Luke 21. Jesus referred to the abomination of desolation only 200 years after the times of Antiochus Epiphanes. Luke wrote his gospel about 35 years after Jesus's death. Nestle wrote his

---

21 From A Discourse Against Transubstantiation, by John Tillotson, 3rd edition (London, 1685).

theory 2000 years after Antiochus's desolation of the temple. Unlike Nestle, Jesus and Luke understood Biblical languages their whole lives. They had advantages over Nestle for ascertaining the facts: the time they lived and their geographic location.

Puns don't depend upon normal meanings of words. "Hocus pocus" can be derived from "hoc est corpus" from the sound of the expression, but not from the meanings of the Latin words. The word "damn" can be derived from the name "Dan" from sound, but not from meaning. Evidently, in Hebrew and Syriac the phrase "abomination of desolation" can be derived from "Baal of Heaven" by sound alone. But puns are jokes. Luke was not joking. Luke explained "abomination of desolation" using unambiguous prose so the reader would correctly understand.

I use the expression "abomination of desolation" because Mark and Matthew used it. Regardless of whether the Greek was an accurate reflection of the Hebrew, Luke knew that the phrase under discussion meant an abomination that desolated. That is, the Roman armies desolated Jerusalem. Nestle's theory depends on the Books of the Maccabees. The only thing Jesus and Luke admired about the Books of the Maccabees was the martyrs discussed in those books. And their source of information on those martyrs may have been Jason of Cyrene, the services at the Feast of Dedication, or some other source, not 1 and 2 Maccabees.

## Daniel 9:27 Did Not Refer to King Manasseh of Judah.

An article I quoted above said that Bible scholars agree that the abomination of desolation is an idol in some sense. The Jewish Encyclopedia said in its article called "Abomination of Desolation" that some rabbis thought that the expression referred to Manasseh's setting up an abominable image in the house of God (2 Chron. 33:7)[22].

King Manasseh really did set up an abominable idol, which could be called an abomination as in Deut. 29:17. His act really did lead to the desolation of the Kingdom of Judah. Verses 4, 5, and 7 of 2 Kings 21 say in the ASV:

> And he built altars in the house of Jehovah, whereof Jehovah said, In Jerusalem will I put my name. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in

22 "Abomination of Desolation", an article in Volume 1 (of 12) of The Jewish Encyclopedia (Projector and Managing Editor Isidore Singer). New York and London, 1901. Digitized by Google.

> the two courts of the house of Jehovah. … And he set the graven image of Asherah, that he had made, in the house of which Jehovah said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever;

So you could accurately say that Manasseh set up an abomination causing desolation in the holy place. And you could truthfully say that an abomination of desolation was standing in the holy place, if you wanted to make this passage sound like the passages under discussion in Mark, Matthew, and Daniel. But Luke thought that the abomination of desolation was armies, not idols. He thought that "standing in the holy place" or "where it ought not" meant armies compassing or surrounding Jerusalem. Another distinction is that Luke said that the abomination stood in an active sense, under its own power, like a living creature. It didn't stand like a lifeless object which is acted upon, like an idol that is set up. It is a confusing oddity of language that such a lifeless idol can also be said to stand, meaning merely that it remains where it is placed until it falls. Luke explained the holy place as the environs of Jerusalem, the area that a besieging army would occupy while compassing or encircling it, not "the two courts of the house of Jehovah".

The Manasseh theory appeared in a Christian magazine in 1878[23]:

> In the early years of his reign (B.C. 698–643), Manasseh had no regard for holy places or things. Prior to his captivity, where he repented of his sin, he sought to undo the reforms of his father. “He built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord.” He set up “a graven image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God.” 2 K. 21:4-7; 2 Chron. 33:7. This may have given rise to Daniel's expression, “abomination that maketh desolate” (Dan. 11:31; 12:11), in whose mind the memory of “the sanctuary that is desolate” was ever present, as the type of the desolation of the restored temples. Dan. 9:17, 24, 26, 27; 12:11. From Daniel comes the New Testament phrase, “abomination of desolation” (Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14), connected by our savior with the final overthrow of the restored edifice.[24]

---

23 "The Defilement of the Temple", an article in *The National Sunday School Teacher*, Vol. XIII. - January, 1878. - No. I. Chicago. Digitized by Google.

24 Despite what the article says, I claim elsewhere in this book that the desolation of Solomon's temple was NOT a type of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Jerusalem

The theory that the abomination of desolation was the idol set up by Manasseh is far more harmonious with Deuteronomy than the theory that it was an idol or altar set up by Antiochus. Manasseh was king of Judah, and Deut. 28-29 warned the Israelites that if they worshipped abominable idols, they would be cursed (Deut. 29:17-28). In contrast, Antiochus was not a Jew or a king of Israel. The fact that he was able to defile the temple shows that God had already forsaken and cursed the Israelites; Jehovah smote the Judeans and set a strange nation over them, a nation speaking a foreign language and making the Judeans serve gods of wood and stone (Deut. 28:15, 25, 36, 49). God never said that he would punish Israel if a pagan king set up an idol in the temple, by force and against the will of the Israelites. Unlike the so-called Maccabean theory of the abomination of desolation of Daniel, the Manasseh theory is reasonable. However, according to Luke, Jesus didn't believe it.

The Hebrew Scriptures had prophesied that idolatry would lead to curses, including the desolation of Israel. For example, Deut. 29:17 seems to use "abominations" as a synonym for "idols":

> And ye have seen their abominations, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them:

Then Deut. 29:24-28 gives idolatry as the reason that God would destroy Israel and send the Israelites into captivity:

> even all the nations shall say, Wherefore hath Jehovah done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they forsook the covenant of Jehovah, the God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods that they knew not, and that he had not given unto them: therefore the anger of Jehovah was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curse that is written in this book; and Jehovah rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as at this day.

---

was destroyed in 70 A.D. because of the murder of prophets, not idolatry. And the 70 A.D. destruction was not a result of a cycle of idolatry, exile, repentance, and return from exile, even though we might think otherwise from reading the blessings and curses of Deuteronomy.

So the worship of abominations, abominable idols, was legal justification to exile Israel. This actually happened to Israel when the 10-tribe kingdom of Israel was exiled by the Assyrians, and when the 2-tribe kingdom was exiled by the Babylonians. Jeremiah blamed the exile of Judah on Manasseh:

> And I will cause them to be tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem.[25]

If Manasseh set up the abomination of desolation, then the abomination didn't perform desolation. The use of the idol was to be punished by desolation. The idol brought a curse along with it. Idolatry was a crime. God knew about the crime. And God motivated his agents to perform desolation as a penalty.

But according to Luke, Jesus thought the abomination of desolation mentioned by Daniel the prophet was armies, not idols. Luke 21:20 substitutes "armies" for "the abomination of desolation" in Matt. and Mark, and describes the desolation done by the armies in verses 21-24. So Luke didn't agree with the theory I quoted above that the abomination was a sin that was to be punished by desolation. It was an abominable gentile army that desolated Jerusalem. And elsewhere Luke explains that the army desolated Jerusalem, not because of idolatry, but because of the murder of the prophets.

## The Abomination of Daniel 9:27 Is Not an Idol.

Luke wrote for Theophilus, who might have been influenced by an idea that seems to have begun in 1 Maccabees chapter 1, namely, that the abomination of desolation is an idol and that the holy place was an altar or temple. Other chapters of this book discredit 1 and 2 Maccabees as keys to interpret the Book of Daniel. Some English translations, especially modern ones, translate Dan. 9:27 as if it has something to do with an altar or a sacrifice.

Some of these translations even use words that suggest that the abomination of desolation was something “set up”, allowing the reader to think that it is an inanimate object. Some of those translations are paraphrases that don't claim to be literal. Literal translations are unintelligible or ambiguous because of the difficulty of the Hebrew

25 Jer. 15:4. See Deut. 28:25.

text. See the chapter in this book about groundless mistranslations of Daniel 11:31 and 12:11.

Idols are called abominations in Deuteronomy 29:17 (KJV, Young's, Brenton, Douay and others). The Babylonian captivity of the Kingdom of Judah was the fulfillment of the curses of Deuteronomy 28 and 29. Jehovah told Manasseh by means of his prophets that He would bring evil upon Jerusalem and Judah because of idolatry (2 Kings 21:11-15; Jeremiah 15:4). Abominable idols did lead to the desolation of Judah, so the idols could be called “abominations of desolation”. But Judea was not responsible for the idol or altar set up by Antiochus Epiphanes in the time of the Maccabees. Manasseh was the king of Judah in the line of David. Deut. 17:14-20 says that a king of Israel was required to write a copy of the Law and read it all the days of his life. So it was reasonable for the nation of Israel and its king to be punished for breaking a covenant that they were part of, according to the terms of that covenant. Antiochus Epiphanes was a foreign idolatrous gentile conqueror who didn't know the Mosaic Law and even caused all the copies of it to be torn up and burned (1 Macc. 1:59 Douay). The Judeans weren't exiled on that occasion as would be expected if the events in Maccabean times corresponded to the events at the time of Manasseh. Judeans weren't guilty of collective, willful idolatry during the time of Antiochus or during the life of Jesus. The Jews who were driven from their homes were driven away by Antiochus, not by God (1 Macc. 1:56 Douay).

1 Macc. 1:57 Douay says:

> On the fifteenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred and forty fifth year, king Antiochus set up the abominable idol of desolation upon the altar of God, and they built altars throughout all the cities of Juda round about:

No matter what the author of those words thought, this idol is not connected with the curses of Deuteronomy and is not the abomination of desolation in Daniel.

There are other things called abominations in the Bible besides idols, so it's wrong to simply assume that any given occurrence of the word is about an idol. Deut. 22:5 says:

> A woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment; for whosoever doeth these things is an abomination unto Jehovah thy God.

Deut. 23:18 says:

> Thou shalt not bring the hire of a harlot, or the wages of a dog, into the house of Jehovah thy God for any vow: for even both these are an abomination unto Jehovah thy God.

Regarding people who cheat with unjust weights, Deut. 25:16 says:

> For all that do such things, *even* all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto Jehovah thy God.

Also swine and other animals are called abominations in Deut. 14:3 and 7-8:

> Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing … . Nevertheless these ye shall not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that have the hoof cloven: The camel, and the hare, and the coney, because they chew the cud but part not the hoof, they are unclean unto you. And the swine, because he parteth the hoof but cheweth not the cud, he is unclean unto you: of their flesh ye shall not eat, and their carcasses ye shall not touch.

Jesus didn't accuse the Jews of his generation of idolatry. He accused them of the murder of prophets (Luke 13:34). The penalty that Jerusalem had to pay for the murder of prophets was desolation according to Luke 13:35:

> Behold, your house is left unto you desolate … .

So Judea didn't have to practice idolatry and be in violation of the threats in Deuteronomy to deserve the penalty of desolation.

The murders of prophets were abominations, scripturally speaking, because the word applies to actions (Gen. 43:32). But Jesus didn't use the phrase "abomination of desolation" as a synonym for "the murder of prophets". Luke substituted the word "armies" for "abomination" in Mark and Matthew, and he explicitly explained the desolation that the abominable Roman army would cause.

## Luke Removed the Ambiguity in Mark 13:14 and Matthew 24:15-16.

According to Mark and Matthew, the reader is admonished: “let him that readeth understand”. Some think that the evangelists wrote these words. Others think that they were a note that accidentally became part of the text. Some think that the words reflect the words of Gabriel in Daniel 9:23-25. I suspect, but don't know, that the words

were spoken by Jesus about the reader of Daniel, not written by the evangelist about the reader of his gospel. Luke found those words in Matthew and Mark, but omitted them. Instead of including a warning that the figures of speech in Daniel that Jesus was using were easy to misunderstand, Luke explained the figures of speech so that the reader would understand and wouldn't need a warning.

I will quote Mark 13:14 Douay, using bold type for the parts of the sentence that readers have almost always misunderstood, despite the exhortation:

> And when you shall see **the abomination of desolation, standing where it ought not** (he that readeth let him understand): **then let them that are in Judea flee unto the mountains**.

Almost the whole passage above is in bold because most people have misunderstood everything ever since the words were spoken. I think that some first-century readers were confused about what the abomination of desolation of Daniel 9:27 was. And they were also confused about why Jesus said the abomination would stand "where he ought not" (Mark 13:14 ASV) or "in the holy place" (Matt. 24:15). Readers might have believed in either the Manasseh theory or the Maccabean theory of the abomination of desolation, which would have led them to think it had something to do with idolatry in the temple. They might have thought that Jesus was referring to an abominable man, later called the Antichrist, who would stand in the temple. And Jewish readers would have first thought of the temple, not the city of Jerusalem, when they heard the phrase "holy place".

Luke eliminated the confusion by changing the wording of Mark and Matthew and substituting the meaning that Jesus had originally tried to convey. Luke 21:20 says: "But when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand." Luke substituted "Jerusalem" for "holy place" in Matthew, and for the phrase "where it ought not" (YLT), in Mark. He substituted the word "armies" for "abomination", and "compassed" for "standing".

Matthew 24:15 uses the expression "holy place". "Holy place" often means the part of the temple that led to the Most Holy, as in Exodus 26:33 (ASV):

> And thou shalt hang up the veil under the clasps, and shalt bring in thither within the veil the ark of the testimony: and the veil shall separate unto you between the holy place and the most holy.

See also Exodus 28:29, 35, and 43; and also 29:30.

Luke himself calls the temple the "holy place" in Acts 21:28:

> … This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place.

The next verse shows that the defilement of the holy place was a Greek named Trophimus going into the temple, not going into Jerusalem, and not going into the Most Holy. Therefore, "holy place" = "temple" in this passage.

Josephus says that the temple as a whole was called "The Holy Place" in *Antiquities* 3.6.4:

> Now the whole temple was called *The Holy Place*: but that part which was within the four pillars, and to which none were admitted, was called *The Holy of Holies*.

Jerusalem is called holy in 1 Maccabees 10:31 (Douay):

> And let Jerusalem be holy and free, with the borders thereof: and let the tenths, and tributes be for itself.

A place other than the temple can be called holy. For example, Deuteronomy 23:14 (ASV) says:

> for Jehovah thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy, that he may not see an unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.

And Exodus 3:5 says:

> And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

Ezra 9:8 says:

> And now for a little moment grace hath been showed from Jehovah our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage.

"Holy place" might mean the entire land of Israel, Judea, or Jerusalem in Ezra 9:8. Commentaries are divided. Based on the frequency of the occurrence of the

expression "holy place" in the Bible, we would expect "holy place" in Matt. 24:15 to mean the room in the temple that led to the Most Holy. And there is also strong reason to suspect that it means the entire temple. The ancient writer of the Greek Gospel of Matthew that has come down to us might have wrongly understood Jesus's original words that way. Alfred Plummer wrote in his commentary on Matthew 24:15:

> 'Standing in *a* holy place' (there is no article) probably means within the Temple-enclosure. In Acts xxi. 28, ο αγιος τοπος means the Temple; and comp. Acts vi. 13. But in 2 Mac. ii. 18 it means the Holy Land; and either the Holy Land (B. Weiss) or the Holy City may be the meaning here.

Plummer doesn't tell us, but the meanings "Holy Land" and "Holy City" are rare meanings. Based on the frequency of the various meanings, I think that an average Greek-speaking Jew would have thought the expression meant "the Most Holy" or "the temple", if nothing else in the context were to change his interpretation.

Luke relied far more on Mark than on Matthew. Jesus probably said: "standing where it ought not" instead of "standing in the holy place".

Jesus's reference to the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, or where it ought not, is taken from passages in the 7th or 9th chapters of Daniel. Daniel 9:26-27, parts of which I will quote from the Douay, says:

> … And **a people with their leader, that shall come, shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary**: and the end thereof shall be waste, and after the end of the war the appointed desolation … **there shall be in the temple the abomination of desolation**: and the desolation shall continue even to the consummation, and to the end.

I think that Mark 13:14 is correct, not Matt. 24:15-16. In either case, if Jesus understood Daniel similarly to how it reads in the Douay, it is easy to see how Jesus got the idea that the abomination of desolation would destroy both Jerusalem and the temple, and where he got the idea that the abomination of desolation would be in the temple. I think that Jesus combined the actual words of Daniel 7 and 9 with conclusions that could easily be inferred. Since the abomination of desolation was going to desolate the temple, and since somebody was destined to "destroy the city", it could be assumed that a Gentile army would besiege Jerusalem. Jesus may have chosen the verb "to stand", thinking of the fourth beast which tread down the earth with its feet (Dan. 7:19, 23, 25), which beast was destined to wear out the saints for "a

time and times and half a time". The beast is explained in Daniel 7 to be a king or kingdom, and its army could be said to be that king or kingdom by a common metonymy[26]. There would be a time, using the metaphor of Daniel 7, when the desolating abomination would stand "where it ought not" normally be, that is, either in Judea or surrounding Jerusalem, before it began to stamp or tread down Jerusalem and the temple like it had trodden down the rest of the earth.

The Book of Daniel didn't have to say that Jerusalem would be "compassed with armies" to authorize Jesus or Luke to say it. Sieges were a normal way to defeat a walled city like Jerusalem. See Deut. 28:52-57. Ancient Biblical sieges include the sieges of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24 and 25), the failed siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib (2 Kings 18 and 19), and the siege of Samaria by Shalmaneser king of Assyria (2 Kings 17:5-6)[27]. Jesus himself explicitly said in plain language (Luke 19:43) that Jerusalem would be besieged:

> For the days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side.

It should have been clear from Daniel's prophecy that God wouldn't save Jerusalem from this attack with an angelic savior like in the days of Sennacherib. Nor would an earthly warlord like Judas Maccabaeus save Jerusalem. Since God wasn't going to save Jerusalem, it was to be inferred that everybody in Judea should flee to the mountains, which expression can actually be taken two ways, as either literal or

---

26 In 2 Samuel 10:18, the nation of Israel is said to have defeated the Syrians. But all of Israel could not have been present. The army of Israel did the fighting. Right after saying that Israel defeated the Syrians, the verse says that David did it. But David was the king and military leader. So this verse has a kingdom put for its army, and a king put for his army: "And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew of the Syrians *the men of* seven hundred chariots, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Shobach the captain of their host, so that he died there".

27 Ezek. 4:1-2 and Isa. 29:3 are also prophecies about sieges of Jerusalem.

figurative[28]. The Book of Daniel didn't have to explicitly say that to authorize Jesus to say it.

He who read the passage about the abomination of desolation in Daniel was exhorted to understand[29] because of all the possible misunderstandings. The reader had to understand that Daniel 7 and Daniel 9 both talk about the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple by the fourth beast of Daniel.

2 Thessalonians 2:2-3 speaks of a "man of sin" or "man of lawlessness" who would sit in the temple as if he were God. That explanation probably arose from interpreting the abomination of desolation as a future evil person that some call the Antichrist. And that interpretation may have arisen from reading that the abomination of desolation would stand in the holy place, as Matthew says, which many would interpret as the temple. In contrast, the phrase “stand where it [or, he] ought not” in Mark is more uncertain[30]. Alfred Plummer says below that the neuter participle in the Greek text of Matthew is indefinite, apparently allowing the abomination of desolation to be interpreted either as a human or as an idol:

> There are here two remarkable differences between Mt. and Mk., while Lk., writing later, differs very considerably from both. The words, 'which was spoken of by Daniel the Prophet,' are not in Mk.; and 'standing where *he* ought not' in Mk. (*εστηκοτα οπου ου δει*) becomes 'standing in the holy place' (*εστος εν τοπω αγιω*) in Mt. The masculine participle in Mk. shows that the writer thought of 'the abomination of desolation' as personal, — either an

---

28 I don't know if Jesus's exhortation in Luke 21:21 was a variant of Luke 23:30, which says (ASV): "Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us." In the latter verse, I don't think that Jesus meant that people would literally ask the mountains to fall on them. Jesus was probably using a metaphor of emotion (like darkness, which I discuss elsewhere). Was Jesus thinking of the hills around Jerusalem in Luke 21:21, or was he just using a common saying? See Isa. 2:19-21, Hosea 10:8 and Rev. 6:15.

29 Some say that Gabriel's words in Dan. 9:23, "understand the vision", and his words in 9:25: "Know therefore and discern", were the source of "let the reader understand".

30 Some translations say "where he ought not". The English translator has to decide whether what the pronoun means when he translates. Translations disagree which pronoun to use in Mark 13:14. Some ancient Christians might have differed in their interpretation of the pronoun.

> idolater or an idolatrous image; whereas the neuter participle in Mt. leaves the interpretation of 'the abomination of desolation' indefinite.

My book teaches that Luke read Mark and Matthew and corrected them. So even if the writer of the Greek-language Matthew that we have today, thought that "the holy place" meant the temple or the Holy Place in the temple, he was wrong. Luke thought that whatever Jesus said meant "surrounding Jerusalem". Many English Bible translations don't accept Plummer's interpretation of Mark 13:14. They use the impersonal pronoun "it". But even if Mark really meant that the abomination of desolation was a man, he was wrong. Luke clearly thought that Jesus had meant that the abomination of desolation was gentile armies who would desolate Jerusalem by siege.

2 Thessalonians 2:2-4 probably interprets Matt. 24:15 or Mark 13:14 and it is wrong. I say it is wrong for this reason alone: the explanation is incompatible with Luke's interpretation. 2 Thess. 2 contains the idea that the holy place is the temple and that an evil person is sitting in the temple. I say more about this elsewhere. The eschatology of 2 Thess. seems to be based on Matt. 24, but the "man of sin", or "man of lawlessness", is substituted for the "abomination of desolation". This is the kind of misunderstanding of Daniel that Jesus warned against. It was probably a popular interpretation among the Jews at that time. Paul surely abandoned this interpretation after reading Luke's gospel. Paul may have even told Luke to write a revised gospel, and told him what to include.

Alfred Plummer said while still commenting on Matt. 24:15:

> But of greater interest than either 'the abomination' or the 'holy place' is the significance of the parenthetical 'Let him that readeth understand,' which is in both Mk. and Mt., but is omitted by Lk. Are the words of our Lord's speech? and do they call attention to the places in Daniel where the 'abomination of desolation' is mentioned? In Mt. it looks as if this was the case, owing to the previous mention of Daniel. But in Mk., where there is no such mention, another interpretation is more probable. It is the Evangelist, or the source from which he drew, that calls attention to the words here spoken by Christ. In the latter case the meaning will be: "All readers of this ought now to be on the alert, for the destruction which the Lord foretold must be near at hand." This would imply that Jerusalem was not yet surrounded, but was in danger of being so, by the heathen, at the time when Mk. wrote. But this

> argument cannot be used of Mt. … In Lk. these words of warning are omitted, probably as being no longer of any use.

I say in response that Jesus really spoke the words, "Let him that readeth understand", because wrong interpretations of Daniel abounded even then. Many of those Christians that read both Daniel and Jesus's end-times discourse misunderstood. Therefore, Luke wrote his gospel to get rid of misunderstandings and ambiguities. As long as Christians read Mark and Matthew, they were doomed to misunderstand. So Luke left out the phrase under discussion. Luke substituted the meanings of the symbolic language in Daniel so nobody could misunderstand. Why would he warn the readers against misunderstanding when he explained everything in a foolproof manner? He that read Luke HAD TO understand. Luke substituted the word "armies" for "abomination". He explained the desolation so nobody could misunderstand the phrase "of desolation". He wrote about the surrounding of Jerusalem by a besieging army so that nobody would misunderstand "holy place" or "where it ought not". And later in the 21st chapter Luke hints at the figurative meaning of the "time and times and half a time" in Daniel 7, and also interjects comments to make sure that the reader knew that the signs in the sun, moon, and stars were not literal. The misunderstandings were a crisis in the first century, as shown by the wrong eschatology in 2 Thessalonians. I say more about that in a chapter that follows about the Antichrist.

## Hebrew and Greek Words Translated As "Abomination".

McClintock and Strong's article under the entry "Abomination" (Volume 1, 1867) is very long. I am going to selectively quote from it only those passages that relate to what I have discussed so far:

> **Abomination** (… *piggul'*, filthy *stench*, Lev. vii, 18; "abominable," Lev. xix, 7; Isa. lxv, 4; Ezek. iv, 14; … *shikkuts'*, Deut. xxix, 17; 1 Kings xi, 5, 7; 2 Kings xxiii, 13, 24; 2 Chron. xv, 8; Isa. lxvi, 3; Jer. iv, 1; vii, 30; xiii, 27; xvi, 18; xxxii, 34; Ezek. v, 11; vii, 20; xi, 18, 21; xx, 7, 8, 30; xxxvii, 23; Dan. ix, 27; xi, 31; Dan. xii, 11; Hos. ix, 10; Nah. iii, 6; Zech. ix, 7; or … *shekets, filth*, Lev. vii, 21; xi, 10, 11, 12, 13, 20, 23, 41, 42; Isa. lxvi, 17; Ezek. viii, 10; elsewhere … *toebah', abhorrence*; Sept. *βδελυγμα*, and so N.T., Matt. xxiv, 14; Mark xiii,

14; Luke xvi, 15; Rev. xvii, 4, 5; xxi, 27), any object of detestation or disgust (Lev. xviii, 22; Deut. vii, 25); and applied to an impure or detestable action (Ezek. xxii, 11; xxx, 26; Mal. ii, 11, etc.); to any thing causing a ceremonial pollution (Gen. xliii, 32; xlvi, 34; Deut. xiv, 3); but more especially to idols (Lev. xviii, 22; xx, 13; Deut. vii, 26; 1 Kings xi. 5, 7; 2 Kings xxiii, 13); and also to food offered to idols (Zech. ix, 7); and to filth of every kind (Nah. iii, 6). There are several texts in which the word occurs, to which, on account of their peculiar interest or difficulty, especial attention has been drawn.

The English words used as translations in the article above are from the King James Version. Other Bibles sometimes read differently. McClintock and Strong saw fit to discuss the word "abomination" under one heading, even though the word is translated from several Hebrew words and one Greek word. Bible translations seem to regard the various Hebrew words as synonyms. To simplify this chapter, I won't make any comments about the original Biblical words translated "abomination" till the end of this chapter. The above quotation is long and hard to read. But I left most of it in since a complete understanding of the Biblical word "abomination" shows that it could mean something besides idols in Daniel and in the gospels. I resume the quotation:

The *first* is Gen. xliii, 32: "The Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is an *abomination* … unto the Egyptians." This is best explained by the fact that the Egyptians considered themselves ceremonially defiled if they ate with *any* strangers. The primary reason appears to have been that the cow was the most sacred animal among the Egyptians, and the eating of it was abhorrent to them; whereas it was both eaten and sacrificed by the Jews and most other nations, who, on that account, were abominable in their eyes. It was for this, as we learn from Herodotus (ii, 41), that no Egyptian man or woman would kiss a Greek on the mouth, or would use the cleaver of a Greek, or his spit, or his dish, or would taste the flesh of even clean beef (that is, of oxen) that had been cut with a Grecian carving-knife. … We collect, then, that it was as *foreigners*, not pointedly as Hebrews, that it was an abomination for the Egyptians to eat with the brethren of Joseph. The Jews themselves subsequently exemplified the same practice; for in later times they held it unlawful to eat or drink with foreigners in their houses, or even to enter their dwellings (John xviii, 28; Acts x, 28; xi, 3); for not only were the houses of Gentiles unclean (Mishna, *Ohaloth*, xviii, 7), but they

themselves rendered unclean those in whose house they lodged (Maimonides, *Mishcab a Morheb.* xii, 12) which was carrying the matter farther than the Egyptians (see also *Mitsvoth Tora*, 148). We do not trace these instances, however, before the Captivity (see J. D. Winkler, *Animadvers. Philol.* ii, 175 sq.).

The quotation above says that Egyptians and Jews often thought that foreigners were abominable. The quotation resumes:

> The *second* passage is Gen. xlvi, 34. Joseph is telling his brethren how to conduct themselves when introduced to the king of Egypt; and he instructs them that when asked concerning their occupation they should answer, "Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, *both we and also our fathers*." This last clause has emphasis, as showing that they were hereditary nomade pastors; and the reason is added, "That ye may dwell in the land of Goshen, *for every shepherd is an abomination* … unto the Egyptians." In the former instance they were "an abomination" as *strangers*, with whom the Egyptians could not eat; here they are a further abomination as *nomade shepherds*, whom it was certain that the Egyptians, for that reason, would locate in the border land of Goshen, and not in the heart of the country. That it was nomade shepherds, or Bedouins, and not simply shepherds, who were abominable to the Egyptians, is evinced by the fact that the Egyptians themselves paid great attention to the rearing of cattle. This is shown by their sculptures and paintings, as well as by the offer of this very king of Egypt to make such of Jacob's sons as were men of activity "overseers of his cattle" (xlvii, 6).

The above quotation shows that foreigners, not just idols, were abominations. Later the article says:

> A *fourth* expression of marked import is the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION …, Dan. xi, 31; Sept. *βδελυγμα ηφανισμενον*, or …, Dan. xii, 11; Sept. *το βδελυγμα της ερημωσεως*, literally, *filthiness of the desolation*, or, rather, *desolating filthiness*, which, without doubt, means the idol or idolatrous apparatus which the desolater of Jerusalem should establish in the holy place … . This appears to have been (in its first application) a prediction of the pollution of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes, who caused an idolatrous

altar to be built on the altar of burnt offerings, whereon unclean things were offered to Jupiter Olympius, to whom the temple itself was dedicated … . Josephus distinctly refers to this as the accomplishment of Daniel's prophecy; as does the author of the first book of Maccabees, in declaring that "they set up the abomination of desolation (*το βδελυγμα της ερημωσεως*) upon the altar" (1 Macc. i, 59.; vi, 7; 2 Macc. vi, 2-5; Joseph. *Ant*. xii, 5, 4; xii, 7, 6). The phrase is quoted by Jesus in the same form (Matt. xxiv, 15), and is applied by him to what was to take place at the advance of the Romans against Jerusalem. They who saw "the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place" were enjoined to "flee to the mountains." This may with probability be referred to the advance of the Roman army against the city with their image-crowned standards, to which idolatrous honors were paid, and which the Jews regarded as idols. The unexpected retreat and discomfiture of the Roman forces afforded such as were mindful of our Savior's prophecy an opportunity of obeying the injunction which it contained. That the Jews themselves regarded the Roman standards as *abominations* is shown by the fact that, in deference to their known aversion, the Roman soldiers quartered in Jerusalem forbore to introduce their standards into the city; and on one occasion, when Pilate gave orders that they should be carried in by night, so much stir was made in the matter by the principal inhabitants that, for the sake of peace, the governor was eventually induced to give up the point (Joseph. *Ant*. xviii, 3, 1). Those, however, who suppose that "the holy place" of the text must be the temple itself, may find the accomplishment of the prediction in the fact that, when the city had been taken by the Romans and the holy house destroyed, the soldiers brought their standards in due form to the temple, set them up over the eastern gate, and *offered sacrifice to them* (Joseph. *War*, vi, 6, 1); for (as Havercamp notes from Tertullian, *Apol*. c. xvi, 162) "almost the entire religion of the Roman camp consisted in worshipping the ensigns, swearing by the ensigns, and in preferring the ensigns before all the other gods." Nor was this the last appearance of "the abomination of desolation in the holy place;" for not only did Hadrian, with studied insult to the Jews, set up the figure of a boar over the Bethlehem gate of the city (AElia Capitolina) which rose upon the site and ruins of Jerusalem (Euseb. *Chron*. 1. i, p. 45, ed. 1658), but he erected a temple to Jupiter upon the site of the Jewish temple (Dion Cass. lxix, 12), and caused an image of himself to

> be set up in the part which answered to the most holy place (Nicephorus Callist. iii, 24). This was a consummation of all the abominations which the iniquities of the Jews brought upon their holy place (see Auberlen, *Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 161 sq.).

The encyclopedia is correctly reporting what scholars say, but what scholars say is wrong. Josephus substitutes "idol altar" for "abomination of desolation" in 1 Macc. 1:57 Douay (1 Macc. 1:54 elsewhere) and the "abomination" in 1 Macc. 6:7. Second Maccabees 6:5 says that "the altar was filled with unlawful things" which were forbidden by the laws." It also says in 6:2 that Antiochus's intention was to transform the temple into a "temple of Jupiter Olympius". And Josephus said that the three-year desolation of the temple "came to pass according to the prophecy of Daniel". Scholars who ignore Luke form their interpretation from those unreliable sources. But Luke didn't pay any attention to them. I will show later that the Books of the Maccabees and Josephus are worthless for interpreting Daniel, Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Regarding the last lengthy quotation from the encyclopedia, I already explained that Luke seems to have thought that the "holy place" in Matt. 24:15 meant the environs of Jerusalem. I have explained that the Romans soldiers themselves were the abominations, not their ensigns. "They who saw the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place" were actually the apostles, who were addressed in the second person. But Luke makes it clear that all the Judeans were enjoined to flee to the mountains by an exhortation in the third person. I discussed this at length elsewhere.

The encyclopedia shows that the Hebrew word *shikkuts'* is used in the three passages in Daniel about the abomination of desolation. Most of the verses with *shikkuts'* are about idols. Whereas I said that Josephus and the Books of the Maccabees should be disregarded, I have to take the Biblical usage of the word seriously. What if my interpretation was based strictly on the probability of the meaning of a Hebrew word? Then the three passages in Daniel with *shikkuts'* would be about idols. But my interpretation is based on Luke, not on the Hebrew text, and not based on statistical probability. I bring up this idea elsewhere in a chapter about the Biblical definition of "the holy place" and in a chapter about the Manasseh theory of the abomination of desolation. I count 26 occurrences of *shikkuts'* in the quotation above. Most are about idols. But *shikkuts'* in Nahum 3:6 is about disgusting filth like dirt or dung that was thrown at disgraced people in ancient times. John Calvin thought

that Zechariah 9:7 had nothing to do with idolatry, but rather referred to the blood that wild beasts devour. I show elsewhere that Daniel 11:31 and 12:11 probably refer to the placing or locating of an army, not an idol. The Hebrew word *toebah'*, not *shikkuts'*, was used in Gen. 43:32 and 46:34, but is translated *bdelugma (βδελυγμα)* in the Septuagint in both passages. The encyclopedia referred to those verses. And I use both of those verses to show that gentiles are abominations. *Bdelugma* is the same Greek word used in the three verses in Daniel about the abomination of desolation. I conclude that the Septuagint translators regarded *toebah'* and *shikkuts'* as synonyms. And I think that Jesus and Luke regarded them as synonyms. So it doesn't necessarily matter that most of the scriptures containing *shikkuts'* are about idols.

## The Meaning of the "Times of the Gentiles".

The expression "time and times and half a time" in Daniel couldn't possibly be literal for reasons that I explain in this chapter. To protect first-century readers from misinterpreting the phrase, Luke converted the expression to its meaning, "the times of the Gentiles".

Revelation 11:2 says that the court (or courtyard) of the temple would be given to the gentiles, who would tread it for 42 months. Verse 3 mentions 1260 days, which is the number of days in 42 months if each month has 30 days. The same period of 1260 days is repeated in Rev. 12:6. And this period is mentioned again in Rev. 12:14, but called "a time and times and half a time", which expression originated in Daniel 7:25. Forty-two months and 1260 days are 3½ years. The Book of Revelation did two things that should not be done: it regarded a time as a year and also added the three components of the expression together. Luke didn't want his readers to do that computation when he was referring to Daniel 7. So he substituted another phrase, "the times of the Gentiles". That phrase was easily understood by any reader who understood the theme of the Book of Daniel. It is simple prose, not figurative language, and not as likely to be misinterpreted. The wording was close enough to Daniel 7:25 so that his original readers would recognize that he was alluding to the famous phrase in Daniel. Even though I sometimes think of Theophilus as a Greek-speaking Roman ruler, only a Christian or Jew would recognize the allusion.

In a similar manner, as I explain in another chapter, Luke wrote the clause in Luke 21:25 about "signs in sun and moon and stars" as a substitute for the metaphors in

the other gospels about darkness in the sun and the moon. In that case, Luke paraphrased the original words closely enough so that his readers would still recognize the allusion. Also in that case, Luke had to add a few words of explanation (in Luke 21:26). But in this case, Luke didn't need to add further explanation of the metaphor, since "the times of the Gentiles" was itself an adequate prose definition of the figurative expression.

**Luke substituted the phrase "the times of the Gentiles" for the mysterious phrase in Daniel 7:25.** Luke 21:24 ASV says:

> … Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the **times [καιροι] of the Gentiles** be fulfilled.

By "the times of the Gentiles", Luke was referring to the "time and times and half a time" in Daniel 7:25 (*καιρου και καιρων και ημισυ καιρου*), which Charles Thomson translated "a time and times and the half of a time" in his Septuagint. The reason for suspecting that the phrase is a reference to Daniel is the presence of other allusions to Daniel in the surrounding verses. One of those allusions that Luke already made is to Daniel 7:23, which reads in the Douay:

> And thus he said: The **fourth beast** shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be greater than all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.

I claimed earlier in this book that the fourth beast is the abomination of desolation. That is, it is a gentile army that desolates. And Luke attributed the siege and destruction of Jerusalem to that beast or abomination in Luke 21:20, which speaks of the fourth beast that would tread down the whole earth, calling it an army. Because he was familiar with Biblical metonymy, Luke didn't see much of a distinction between a king and his army and his kingdom. So what was said of the conspicuous horn of the fourth beast, was also said of the beast in Daniel 7:21 and 25 (ASV):

- **verse 21**: I beheld, and the same **horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them**;
- **verse 25**: And **he** shall speak words against the Most High, and **shall wear out the saints of the Most High**; and he shall think to change the times and the law; and **they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time**.

The "time and times and half a time" were given to the horn, not to the beast. The horn is a king (verse 24). The beast can be interpreted either as a kingdom or as its army or even as the king and leader of its army. The horn is said to wear out the saints. I claim that this is the same as what the beast in chapter 7 does to the saints, but in different words. Notice that Luke says that Jerusalem would be trodden by the gentiles. Luke is literally saying that Jerusalem would be trodden by people. But I think that he intended for it to be subauded, or understood, by his readers that Jerusalem would be trodden by the four legs of the terrible beast in Daniel 7. Another passage Luke was probably thinking about, and which I discuss elsewhere, is Daniel 9:27, which reads in the Douay:

> And he shall confirm the covenant with many, in one week: and in the half of the week the victim and the sacrifice shall fail: and there shall be in the temple the **abomination of desolation**: and **the desolation shall continue even to the consummation, and to the end**.

Although phrased differently, the period of time that the desolation was to continue in Dan. 9:27 was the same figurative "time and times and half a time" given to the horn in Daniel 7. Also see the preceding verse, Dan. 9:26, where the same event, "the appointed desolation", is mentioned. The period of desolation is left undefined in both Dan. 9:26 and 27, and I claim that "a time and times and half a time" is an undefined period of time.

I keep making assertions about metonymy, including in this chapter. So I will add some ideas here about the different meanings of the word "kingdom" in Daniel and the subject of metonymy:

- The word "kingdom" in Daniel can mean the rulership given to one man. Dan. 2:37: "Thou, O king, art king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the glory;" His rulership temporarily departed from Nebuchadnezzar when he went crazy. Of course, the realm he ruled didn't depart. Dan. 4:31: "While the word was in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, *saying*, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken: The kingdom is departed from thee:"
- The word "kingdom" in Daniel can mean the territory ruled. Thus Dan. 5:11 speaks of a man in a kingdom: "There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods … ." A person can be in a place. In Esther 2:3, a kingdom is made up of provinces. In Joshua 13:30-31, the kingdom of Og king of

Bashan was part of a border. A border is geographical, not abstract as when kingdom means rulership or dynasty.

- The word "kingdom" can mean the military power of a country ruled by a king. Rulerships and geographical areas don't "break in pieces and consume kingdoms". And they don't "tread the earth". They use their armies to do that. Yet Daniel 2:44 says: "And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." And Dan. 7:23 says: "Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces." When the word "kingdom" is used in this sense, the kingdom does something that a general or army does. So the nouns for a kingdom, its general, and its army can be substituted for each other.

2 Samuel 10:18 says that Israel defeated the Syrians, and then says that King David did it, even though every ancient reader knew that the army of the Kingdom of Israel actually did the fighting. In 1 Samuel 13:1-4, it is said that Saul and Jonathan "smote the garrison of the Philistines". But it is not possible that those two men smote so many Philistines. Saul's 2000 men and Jonathan's 1000 men must have done most of the smiting. Any early reader of the passage would have immediately known that Saul the king and Jonathan the military commander were put for their armies. And the passage could have said that the Kingdom of Israel had smitten the Philistines. See also 1 Samuel 15:7-8, where it is said that "Saul smote the Amalekites". The name of a general or king is again put for his army. And this passage also could have said that the Kingdom of Israel had smitten the Amalekites.

There are several public-domain books about metonymy. I don't think that any of them have many examples of the precise kind I am mentioning here. I probably didn't find the best examples. But I will add that it is easy to find similar cases of God saying he would do something, even though same thing is said to really be done by his agent. And that agent is said to be either a kingdom or king or armies. God says in Isaiah 13:9 that "the day of Jehovah cometh" "to make the land a desolation". God says in verse 11: "I will punish the world for *their* evil." But reading the entire chapter shows that God was going to stir up the Medes against Babylon. So God is metonymically put for the Medes, his agents. God says in Isaiah 14:25: "... I will break

the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot ... ." But Isaiah later explains that an angel of God, his agent, not God Himself, destroyed the Assyrian army.

**The author of the Book of Revelation seems to have started the interpretation that the word "kairos" means "year" in Daniel 7:25.** The definition of "year" for "*kairos*" does not appear in some Greek lexicons. But it does in some. Edward Robinson and Parkhurst said that "*kairos*" = "year" in a prophetic use of the word. All the lexicons that I have seen which give this definition cite the Book of Revelation. This is from Samuel C. Loveland's lexicon[31]:

> *Καιρος, ου, ο, time, season, opportunity; a year,* Rev. xii. 14.

As the lexicon says, the author of Revelation does indeed mean that a *kairos* is a year because verse 6 calls the "time and times and half a time" of verse 14, "a thousand two hundred and threescore days", which number of days is 3½ years. If the Book of Revelation did not exist, Loveland and other lexicographers would not have entered a definition for a prophetical year in their lexicons.

I claim in this book that Luke corrected mistakes in some books of the Christian Scriptures. Unlike commentators who reconcile irreconcilable Bible passages, I am suggesting here that Revelation 12 is wrong, containing an interpretation that was corrected by Luke.

When the Book of Daniel was written, I assume that everybody understood that the phrase under discussion was figurative. In the first century, Jesus and Luke understood that, but the author of Revelation didn't. The fact that Daniel speaks of "a time and times and half a time" in Dan. 7:25, and also of "seven times" in Daniel chapter 4, facilitated the wrong interpretation that "a time" = "a year", because years can be counted. The fact that the times are counted isn't proof that times are years, because times are counted in Daniel 6:10 and 13, where Daniel kneels down three times (*καιρους τρεις*) a day, not three years a day. Likewise, the seven times (*επτα καιροι*) of Daniel 4 could conceivably mean seven occasions when Nebuchadnezzar lost his sanity. John Calvin thought that the number seven here was figurative.

Daniel may have intended the word "time" to have one of the other definitions of "*kairos*" found in the lexicons. Few if any English translations render Daniel 2:21 with

---

31 A Greek Lexicon Adapted to the New Testament, with English Definitions, by Samuel C. Loveland (Woodstock, Vt., 1828).

the word "years". Since I am discussing the Greek word *kairos*, I will cite the Greek Old Testament. In his 1844 translation of the Septuagint, Brenton translates Dan. 2:21:

> And he changes times[32] and seasons: he appoints kings, and removes *them*, giving wisdom to the wise, and prudence to them that have understanding:

Charles Thomson translates the passage similarly: "he changeth times and seasons". Thomson and Brenton translate *καιρους και χρονους* in Dan. 2:21 "times and seasons", not “years and seasons”. Brenton translated the expression *εως καιρου και καιρου* in Daniel 7:12 "for certain times"[33], adding in a marginal note: "*Lit*. time and time". Charles Thomson translated the phrase literally: "until a time and a time". Neither added the times together and translated "until two times"[34].

But what if Revelation 12 is correct? After all, the first verse of that book says that "the Revelation of Jesus Christ" was given by God to Jesus to show his servants. God is the greatest possible authority. Luke wrote his gospel by laboriously studying previous gospels and testimonies. It would have been so much better if God or Jesus had sent an angel to tell him what to write. That way Luke wouldn't have had to work so hard and his gospel would have been infallible. But there are several reasons for doubting the interpretations of Revelation. The book was doubted by, or unknown to, many ancient Christians. The book makes confused allusions to the Hebrew Scriptures, some of which I will mention elsewhere. Revelation overrules the previous counsel given by Jesus and Luke to not interpret the meaning of the time periods in Daniel. The time periods in Daniel were given by angels. But Jesus said (Mark 13:32 ASV):

> But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

The apostles knew that Jesus was making references to Daniel. Jesus's counsel hadn't changed after his resurrection. So Acts 1:7 says:

---

32 *καιρους* LXX.

33 I think that Brenton hit on the correct idiomatic meaning, not only for Dan. 7:12, but also for Dan. 7:25.

34 Some Greek readers of the Septuagint probably thought that the lives of the beasts were prolonged for two years. This is the danger of thinking that "a time" is "a year" according to a special prophetic sense.

> And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times (*καιρους*) or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority.

The phrase "times or seasons" would have reminded the disciples of Daniel 2:21 and 7:12. I understand this passage to mean: “Don't try to calculate time periods from the Book of Daniel.”

When Luke wrote "times of the Gentiles" in Luke 21:24 instead of "time and times and half a time" (Dan. 7:25), I think he intended for the reader to understand “the time that God allows the gentiles to rule over God's people”. And he was referring to the time periods of desolation mentioned in Daniel 9:26 and 27. Luke didn't quote "a time and times and half a time" because he understood it as a figurative expression meaning an indefinite period of time, a certain time period. Luke didn't want to confuse Theophilus with a Hebrew figure of speech, possibly already archaic or obsolete, which was liable to be misunderstood. Brenton, quoted above, resisting the temptation to translate *kairos* as "year" and also resisting the temptation to add them, translated the expression *εως καιρου και καιρου* in Daniel 7:12 "for certain times". If he could translate "a time and a time" as "certain times", couldn't he have translated "a time and times" as "certain times". And couldn't he have also translated "a time and times and half a time" as "certain times"?

Is the special definition sometimes given in lexicons for *kairos* in the Book of Revelation, namely, that *kairous* = "years", a possible meaning in Luke's books?

Luke never used *kairos* to mean "year" in his gospel or Acts. Here is how Luke used the word *kairos* in his gospel:

- Luke 1:20: … thou believedst not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season (*καιρον*).
- Luke 4:13: … he departed from him for a season (*καιρου*).
- Luke 8:13: … in time (*καιρω*) of temptation … .
- Luke 12:42: … to give them their portion of food in due season (*καιρω*)?
- Luke 12:56: … ye know not how to interpret this time (*καιρον*)?
- Luke 13:1: Now there were some present at that very season (*καιρω*) … .
- Luke 18:30: … who shall not receive manifold more in this time (*καιρω*), and in the world to come eternal life.
- Luke 19:44: … thou knewest not the time (*καιρον*) of thy visitation.

- Luke 20:10: And at the season (*καιρω*) he sent unto the husbandmen a servant … .
- Luke 21:8: … The time (*καιρος*) is at hand … .
- Luke 21:24: … until the times (*καιροι*) of the Gentiles be fulfilled.
- Luke 21:36: But watch ye at every season (*καιρω*), making supplication … .

Here is how Luke used the word *kairos* in Acts:

- Acts 3:19: … seasons (*καιροι*) of refreshing … .
- Acts 7:20: At which season (*εν ω καιρω*) Moses was born … .
- Acts 12:1: Now about that time (*καιρον*) … .
- Acts 13:11: … not seeing the sun for a season (*καιρου*) … .
- Acts 14:17: … fruitful seasons (*καιρους*) … .
- Acts 17:26: … *their* appointed seasons (*καιρους*) … .
- Acts 19:23: … about that time (*καιρον*) … .
- Acts 24:25: … and when I have a convenient season (*καιρον*), I will call thee unto me.

**Studious commentators have acknowledged that kairos doesn't mean "year".** The following is from Volume 2 of Thomas Myers's translation of John Calvin's Commentaries on Daniel, in "Lecture Thirty-Seventh":

> Those who consider a "time" to mean a "year," are in my opinion wrong. They cite the forty-two months of the Apocalypse, (chap. xiii. 5,) which make three years and a half; but that argument is not conclusive, since in that case a year will not consist of 365 days, but the year itself must be taken figuratively for any indeterminate time. It is better then to keep close to the Prophet's words. A "time," then, is not put for a certain number of months or days, nor yet for a single year, but for any period whose termination is in the secret counsel of God.

The Geneva Bible has similar figurative interpretations of the expression under discussion in its marginal notes. It is hard to read because of Middle-English abbreviations, discontinued spellings, and abbreviations that originated in Latin manuscripts. I will copy two marginal notes, changing them so the normal reader can

understand them. A marginal note in the Geneva Bible on "until a time and times and the dividing of time" of Daniel 7:25 says:

> God shall suffer them thus to rage against his Saints for a long time, which is meant by the time and times but at length he will assuage these troubles and shorten the times for his elects' sake (Matt. 24:22), which is here meant by the dividing of time.

In its marginal note on Daniel 12:7, where a man clothed in linen swears "that it shall tarry for a time, two times and a half", the Geneva Bible says:

> Which was, as it were, a double oath and did the more confirm the thing in meaning, a long time, a longer time, and at length a short time, signifying that their troubles should have an end.

I said above that the author of Revelation thought that the times of Daniel were years. The annotations in the 1560 Geneva Bible did not agree. They assumed that the author of Revelation knew the figurative meaning of the expression. That Bible has this marginal note on the 42 months of Rev. 11:2: "Meaning, a certain time: for God hath limited the times of Antichrist's tyranny." And it has this marginal note on the 1260 days of Rev. 11:3: "Signifying a certain time: for when God giveth strength to his ministers, their persecutions seem, but as it were for a day or two."

Even those commentators who acknowledge that the Aramaic and Greek words under discussion don't mean "year" are usually misled by Daniel 4, by the Book of Revelation, or by the angels in Daniel 12. Here is a partial quotation from Albert Barnes in his commentary on Daniel 7:25[35], where he explained the meanings of the Latin and Greek words:

> The word used here rendered *time, times, time* … - is a word which, in itself, would no more designate any definite and fixed period than our word *time* does. See ch. ii. 8, 9, 21, iii. 5, 15, iv. 16, 23, 25, 32, vii. 12. In some of these instances, the period *actually referred to* was a year, (ch. iv. 16, 23), but this is not necessarily implied in the word used, but the limitation is demanded by the circumstances of the case. So far as the *word* is concerned, it would denote a day, a week, a month, a year, or a larger or

35 Notes, Critical, Illustrative, and Practical on the Book of Daniel, by Albert Barnes. (New York, 1857).

> smaller division of time, and the period actually intended to be designated must be determined from the connection. The Latin Vulgate is indefinite - *ad tempus*; so the Greek, *εως καιρου*; so the Syriac, and so Luther - *eine Zeit*, and so Lengerke, *eine Zeit*. The phrase 'for a time,' expresses accurately the meaning of the original word. The word rendered '*times*' is the same word in the plural, though evidently with a dual signification, Gesenius, *Lex*. Lengerke, *in loc*. The obvious meaning is two such times as is designated by the former time. The phrase 'and the dividing of a time,' means clearly *half* of such a period. Thus, if the period denoted by a 'time' here be a year, the whole period would be three years and a half.

The quotation above shows that the word "time" used in Daniel, in itself, does not mean "year". But commentators think that the meaning is shown to be a year in Daniel 7 from other Bible verses. For example, Barnes thought that the seven times in Daniel 4 was seven years. But maybe the seven times meant seven occasions. In "Lecture Nineteenth" of Volume 1 of Myers's translation of John Calvin's commentaries on Daniel, Calvin says: "I have said nothing of those times, but their opinion is probable who take it for an indefinite number, meaning, until a long time shall pass away." Instead of writing 42 months or 1260 days, Luke defined this phrase in Dan. 7:25 as "the times of the Gentiles" so we wouldn't be tempted to do useless calculations. Luke's phrase was indefinite like the Latin *ad tempus* (mentioned by Barnes). Luke did not figure that "a time and times and half a time" was 3½ years

- because Jesus said in Mark 13:32 that the angels didn't know the day and hour, which I think was a reference to the angels in Daniel 12, and
- because Daniel could have easily written "3½ times" or "3½ years", but instead he wrote the words in the phrase in an unnatural order, neither ascending nor descending, which signified that the phrase was figurative and not to be added, and
- because Jesus, referring to the *kairous* in Daniel, told the apostles just before his ascension: "It is not for you to know times (*καιρους*) or the seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority", and
- because Luke knew that the expression under discussion was unsolvable without divine help like the handwriting on the wall in Daniel 5.

**The phrase in Daniel 7:25 couldn't be literal, so it had to be figurative.** The "times of the Gentiles" and the "time and times and half a time" probably have a

similar meaning to the time periods mentioned in Jeremiah which lasted "until the time of his own land come" (Jer. 27:7 ASV), "until the day that I visit them" (Jer. 27:22). If Jeremiah had phrased his sentence like Luke's sentence, and said that the nations would have to serve Nebuchadnezzar until the times of the Babylonians were fulfilled, the meaning would have been the same.

Luke's writings are understandable. The Book of Revelation is frequently not understandable. Revelation was written by a zealous Christian in the first century, but it really does seem to be wrong in defining "a time, and times, and half a time" as "1260 days". A "time" does not mean a "year", and even though it does mean "occasion", the mysterious phrase does not even mean 3½ occasions because of the unnatural order of the words. Why didn't Revelation explain the 1290 or the 1335 days[36] that were explicitly mentioned in Daniel instead of converting "a time and times and half a time" into 42 months, and then further converting the period into 1260 days[37]? Who can explain why Revelation speaks of the tribe of Joseph in Rev. 7:8, even though there was no such tribe? Why does the book omit the tribes of Ephraim and Dan? Why does Revelation 11:4 speak of the two olive trees and the two candlesticks that stand before the Lord of the earth? Zechariah 4:11-12 does indeed speak of two olive trees, but only one candlestick. The author of Revelation also sees living creatures and a wild beast reminiscent of, but not the same as, those in Ezekiel 1 and Daniel 7 (see Rev. 4:6-8 and Rev. 13). God and Jesus were not responsible for the confusion in Revelation, despite the claim in Revelation 1:1. Because of all the unexpected things in Revelation that appear to deviate from the Scriptures, I don't consider the book as proof that the "time and times and half a time" means 3½ years.

**Clermont-Ganneau's theory about Daniel 5:25 may help explain the phrase in Daniel 7:25.** I am less confident about the information below, which is based on the idea that the handwriting on the wall contained the names of weights used on balances. Whether Clermont-Ganneau's theory is right or wrong, *kairos* still doesn't mean "year". And whether his theory is right or wrong, Luke really did substitute "the times of the Gentiles" for "a time and times and half a time". I don't have any insight into the archaeological or linguistic merits of this argument, but I will mention it because it is a way to explain the expression "a time and times and half a time".

---

36 Dan. 12:7, 11 and 12.

37 Rev. 11:2-3; 12:6, 14.

The words MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN are in many translations of Daniel 5:25. Some modern commentaries say that the words are four nouns, meaning, A MINA, A MINA, A SHEKEL, and HALF MINAS. In the *Journal Asiatique* in 1886 Clermont-Ganneau explained his theory that the words on the wall were weights. The author thought that the word for half-minas was in the dual number. Here is a reference to Clermont-Ganneau's article in A Dictionary of the Bible[38]:

> This term most scholars now agree in finding − as first suggested by M. Clermont-Ganneau − in the PERES and U-PHARSIN of Dn. 5:[28], [25], the mysterious writing on the wall signifying, not as in RVm 'numbered, numbered, weighed, and divisions,' but 'a mina, a mina, a shekel, and half-minas.'

The word that the quotation called "this term" was *peras*, or half-mina. RV (the Revised Version referred to above) reads the same as the KJV, ASV, and numerous other Bibles in the text: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. The marginal reading in the RV (The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments, Vol. 4, 1885) defines the words, saying:

> That is, *Numbered, numbered, weighed, and divisions*.

But that marginal definition was wrong according to Clermont-Ganneau's theory. The margin should instead say:

> That is, *a mina, a mina, a shekel, and half-minas*.

Notice that this theory is that these are four nouns, not verbs. That encyclopedia article presents a chart showing a shekel to be equal to 50 minas. But some say a shekel is 60 (or some other number) of minas.

The interpretation is in Dan. 5:25-28. Verses 26-28 in the ASV read:

> This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and brought it to an end. TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

---

38 In an article called "Weights and Measures" on page 906 of Volume IV. A Dictionary of the Bible, etc. edited by James Hastings. 4 volumes. (New York, 1911). See also Driver's commentary on Daniel.

Daniel's interpretation doesn't seem to make sense based on the meanings of mina, shekel, and half minas because the interpretation depends on a play on words understandable in Aramaic.

Since the king, not his reign, is being weighed, I think that we are to picture Belshazzar in one of the pans on the balance, and the weights in the other pan. For some reason Belshazzar suddenly weighs less than the weights, and the pan that holds him flies up as if weightless. There is a theory that the words MENE MENE TEKEL UPHARSIN represent money instead of weights. But an argument I present below requires them to be weights used for an ancient balance or scale.

**"Time and times and half a time" has similarities to MENE MENE TEKEL UPHARSIN.** Francis Brown wrote that Clermont-Ganneau was confused by the sequence of the weights.

> This would give, with the present division of words, "A mina, a mina, a shekel and (two) half-minas." Since, however, a shekel is only the 60th (or the 100th) part of a mina, he thinks it unlikely that these three weights would be arranged in this order.[39]

The three weights have an unexpected sequence, neither progressing from lower values to higher values, nor declining from higher values to lower ones. The smallest unit, the shekel, is in the middle of the phrase. The expression "time and times and half a time" also has an illogical order. The logical order would be either "[two] times and a time and half a time", arranging the units in descending order. Or else, the order could be "half a time and a time and [two] times", in ascending order.

Both puzzling expressions contain a noun in the dual number. Commentaries agree that the Aramaic word for "half-minas" is dual in number. It means two half-minas. Likewise, commentaries agree that the plural word "times" in the phrase in Dan. 7:25 is dual in number. That is, there is widespread agreement that the phrase under discussion doesn't mean "a time and **three** times and half a time", but only "a time and **two** times and half a time".

Since there are two half-minas, there are actually 3 minas total (equal to 50 or 60 shekels each) plus a shekel. If I have it figured out correctly, God determined that Belshazzar weighed 181 shekels when he was found wanting: 60 + 60 + 1 + 30 + 30 =

---

39 From "Notes on Biblical Archaeology", by Francis Brown, page 431 of *The American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1886.

181 shekels. That is the weight that somehow showed Belshazzar to be wanting, or too light. Belshazzar was king as long as he was on the balance, but the duration of his reign is not stated. I guess that God put one last shekel on one side of the balance, resulting in Belshazzar's side of the balance going up, as if weightless.

How can the "time and times and half a time" be imagined in Daniel 7:25? It may figuratively represent the period of time that the last horn of the fourth beast would be on God's scale until God had found him wanting, using his weights. Maybe God's scale and weights are understood but not mentioned in Daniel 7. After being found wanting (or weightless), after the "time and times and half a time", the dominion of that horn was taken away.

The reader of Daniel 5 was not supposed to add the weights to see how many shekels the kings weighed the way I did above, and the reader of Daniel 7 was not supposed to add the times. The language in Daniel 5 is figurative. The reader is only supposed to understand the theme of the Book of Daniel as expressed in Dan. 2:21, as applied specifically to Belshazzar:

> And he changeth the times and the seasons; he removeth kings, and setteth up kings;

A complete explanation of the original phrase "a time and times and half a time" is impossible for the modern reader. So it is enough for the reader of Daniel 7 to understand that Dan. 2:21 was to be applied to the last horn of the fourth beast, the one that spoke great words against the Most High. That is, the last horn would be removed as a king when the time God granted him was over.

This chapter is about the Gentile Times in Luke. My digression about the mysterious words in Daniel 5 is to support my claim that the "times of the Gentiles" of Luke is the same as the "time and times and half a time" in Daniel 7, which phrase is not understandable from the context, and therefore needs an inspired interpreter. Daniel interpreted the handwriting on the wall (Dan. 5:17-28); Luke interpreted the phrase in Daniel 7:25 (Luke 21:24). And Luke interpreted the "time and times and half a time" in plain words because Daniel didn't.

When Luke substituted "times of the Gentiles" for "time and times and half a time", he was substituting the literal meaning of a figurative expression that few people understood in his time. Luke may have thoroughly understood the two cryptic phrases under discussion. But instead of actually explaining metaphors, and answering all the

questions we would like to ask, Luke's habit in his gospel was just to substitute the metaphors' meanings.

Ancient readers of Daniel at some time in the past may have recognized the "time and times and half a time" in one Daniel story as an allusion to the shekel and minas and half minas in the other Daniel story. Luke rephrased the "time and times and half a time" as "the times of the Gentiles" and meant the duration of time that God alloted to the gentiles, or to the fourth beast. The unusual phrase might have signified imaginary weights used to measure time, just as the minas and shekels were weights to measure Belshazzar. Jehovah measures mountains, hearts and spirits[40]. 1 Samuel 2:3 says that God weighs men's actions. Psalm 62:9 speaks of men being weighed in a balance and found "lighter than vanity". God has a figurative balance and figurative weights to do all this weighing.

## Luke Moved Some Verses in Matthew 24 and Mark 13 to Luke 17.

Luke separated certain verses pertaining to the days of Lot and the days of Noah from Jesus's eschatological discourse in Matthew 24. He put them in Luke 17. I assume that he just wanted to move these verses into the original speech where they occurred. Most of the verses made sense in Mark and Matthew as long as incorrect meanings weren't read into them. Below, I will list some sections of Luke 17 in consecutive order with their sources in Matthew and Mark:

- **Luke 17:24** ASV: for as the lightning, when it lighteneth out of the one part under the heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall the Son of man be in his day. Matthew 24:27: For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the coming of the Son of man.
- **Luke 17:26-27**: And as it came to pass in the days of Noah, even so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Matthew 24:38-39: For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until

40 Isaiah 40:12 and 15; Prov. 16:2, 21:2.

the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of man.

- **Luke 17:31**: In that day, he that shall be on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not go down to take them away: and let him that is in the field likewise not return back. Matthew 24:17-18: let him that is on the housetop not go down to take out the things that are in his house: and let him that is in the field not return back to take his cloak. Verse 40: Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken, and one is left: Mark 13:15-16: and let him that is on the housetop not go down, nor enter in, to take anything out of his house: and let him that is in the field not return back to take his cloak.
- **Luke 17:35**: There shall be two women grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Matthew 24:41: two women *shall be* grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left.
- **Luke 17:37**: And they answering say unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Where the body *is*, thither will the eagles also be gathered together. Matthew 24:28: Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Matthew 24:31: And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. See also Mark 13:27.

Matthew 24:37 compares the salvation that the Son of Man promises to provide for the righteous to the days of Noah, saying: "And as *were* the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man." In the case of the days of Noah, eight people were saved but the rest of mankind were killed. Luke moved the verses in Matthew 24 about the days of Noah and about the selective salvation of two men in the field and two women grinding. As explained elsewhere, Matthew 24:16 pertains to all Judeans. But Matthew 24:17-18 pertains to the faithful, and is separated into Luke 17.

I have said some things about how Luke 17:20-37 was constructed. But what does this section mean? The salvations in Luke 17 might have all occurred on the day that Luke 21:27-28 was fulfilled. Or there might have been some angelic salvations in cities before that time.

After quoting Job 39:26-30, Calmet's Dictionary said in an article under the heading "Eagle"[41]:

---

41 Calmet's Dictionary of the Holy Bible by Charles Taylor, etc., (London, 1832).

> To the last line in this quotation, our Saviour seems to allude in Matt. xxiv. 28. "Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together;" that is, wherever the Jewish people, who were morally and judicially dead, might be, there would the Roman armies, whose standard was an eagle, and whose strength and fierceness resembled that of the king of birds, in comparison with his fellows, pursue and devour them.

If Jesus had meant that, Luke would have included the saying about the eagle in Luke 21, which contains verses about the desolation of Jerusalem and Judea. But Luke removed it from Jesus's "last-days" speech and put it in Luke 17, which is about the salvation of Christians. So it makes more sense to interpret eagles as saving angels who will gather righteous believers all over the world. I say more about the eagles gathering together in another chapter.

**Luke 17:20-21.** The section of Luke under discussion actually begins in Luke 17:20-21, where the Pharisees ask Jesus when the kingdom of God would come. Jesus answered:

> The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, There! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you.

The question that the Pharisees asked was similar to the one the disciples asked in Luke 21:7 and in Acts 1:6. The Pharisees and Jesus's disciples might have been thinking of the fulfillment of Daniel 2:44 and Daniel 7:11-14, the dramatic destruction of gentile rule and the immediate beginning of the kingdom of God.

I think that the meaning of “the kingdom of God being within you” in Luke 17:21 can be explained from the examples that Jesus gives in subsequent verses. God was in the midst of people in the days of Noah, in the sense that his agent Noah preached and built an ark in the midst of the people. And two saving angels were in the midst of Sodom in the days of Lot. In both cases, most people were oblivious to God's work in finding those worthy of being saved till sudden destruction came upon them[42]. Lot's sons-in-law thought that the angels were ordinary men; the Pharisees thought that Jesus was an ordinary man. Jesus meant that the kingdom of God was invisibly

---

42 2 Peter 2:5-9. Noah preached righteousness in the days of Noah. That helped God identify those righteous enough to save. The angels found righteous Lot and tried to save his family.

working in the midst of Pharisees even though they were blind to it[43]. Luke 22:69, Acts 2:33, Acts 5:31, and Acts 7:55 agree that Jesus was exalted by God to heaven after his death. But he remained invisible since he was in heaven. Jesus performed many miracles in Acts through the power of the Holy Spirit. These acts of the kingdom of God occurred in the midst of wicked people before the kingdom of God manifested itself.

Jesus told 70 disciples in Luke 10:9 to tell the citizens who received them: "… The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you". And he told them in Luke 10:11 to tell cities that rejected them: "… nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh." Luke 10:12-16 goes on to threaten faithless cities and to give hope to faithful cities that received Jesus's disciples. "To come nigh" and "to be in the midst of" are phrases of place, of nearness. Whatever the exact sense is of the kingdom of God coming nigh in Luke 10, is probably close to the sense in which “the kingdom of God is within you” in Luke 17. By metonymy, the kingdom being put for its agents, the kingdom of God was said to be literally near or in the midst of people, according to whether its agents were literally near or in the midst of people. Just as the salvations of the cities in Luke 10 depended on how they treated the 70 evangelists, so also in Luke 17 the salvation of the world depended on how they treated Noah. And the salvation of the righteous in the days of Lot depended on how they treated the two angels .

I mentioned earlier that the Pharisees as well as Jesus's disciples expected the kingdom of God described in the Book of Daniel. The question that the Pharisees asked about when the kingdom of God would come, actually pertains to the rest of this section of Luke, even if the connection is not apparent. The Pharisees believed in

---

43 Luke 11:20 may have a similar sense when it says: "But if I by the finger of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you." Luke explains in 17:25 that the Son of Man would be rejected. That could happen because the kingdom of God didn't "come with observation" (verse 20). Oppositely, the people about whom people said: "Lo there!" (verse 23) did come with observation. But they were false messiahs and they couldn't save. The people in the days of Noah, in the days of Lot, and in the time of Jesus thought that Noah, the two disguised angels who went to Sodom, and Jesus were insignificant citizens who couldn't save them. Luke 17:20-37 is about salvation. The Pharisees knew about the kingdom of God in Daniel. But their understanding of it was different from Jesus's. They understood Daniel 7 to promise that the Messiah would come to save them from the Romans and substitute a Jewish Kingdom of God. But their interpretation of Daniel 9:26 and Isaiah 53 was different from Jesus's.

doctrines derived from Daniel according to Acts 23:8. The Pharisees thought they were righteous (Luke 5:30-32, 15:2). They didn't believe that Judea was going to have to endure another desolation like the Babylonian captivity before the kingdom of God would manifest itself[44]. They probably thought that Rome was the fourth world power of Daniel 7, like Josephus, another Pharisee, did. They knew that the kingdom of God was destined to come after the fourth world power according to Daniel 2 and 7. They just didn't know exactly when. They probably pictured a warlord-savior like Judas Maccabaeus. I say this because the Feast of Dedication, called by Josephus [the Festival of] Lights, which honored Judas Maccabaeus, was practiced in Judea during the first century (John 10:22 and *Antiquities* 12.7.7). Josephus was a Pharisee and he fought against the Romans. The Pharisees that Jesus was speaking to 35 years before the siege of Jerusalem might have been looking for a similar opportunity to rebel against the gentile rulers. The Pharisees were by far the most numerous sect of Jews, so they must have approved of that Feast of Dedication, just as their descendants, Rabbinic Jews, do today. According to Josephus, there were few Sadducees. Thus he wrote, in Antiquities 18.1.4:

> But the doctrine of the Sadducees is this: that souls die with the bodies; nor do they regard the observation of any thing besides what the law enjoins them; for they think it an instance of virtue to dispute with those teachers of philosophy whom they frequent; but this doctrine is received but by a few, yet by those still of the greatest dignity. But they are able to do almost nothing of themselves; for when they become magistrates, as they are unwillingly and by force sometimes obliged to be, **they addict themselves to the notions of the Pharisees, because the multitude would not otherwise bear them**.

**Luke 17:22-23.** Jesus tells his disciples in detail what he was thinking about right after he spoke to the Pharisees. He says in Luke 17:22-23:

---

44 Josephus, a Pharisee, said in *Antiquities* 10.11.7: "In the very same manner Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made desolate by them." He wrote that after the desolation occurred. But if he had believed that Rome was destined to desolate Judea before the war, he wouldn't have fought against Rome. Josephus may have fought the Romans because he initially thought that the Times of the Gentiles had ended, and that God would lead a Messianic earthly Son of man like Judas Maccabaeus to victory.

> … The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, Lo, there! Lo, here! go not away, nor follow after *them*:

Ancient rabbinical writings spoke of the "days of the Messiah". Jesus avoided using the word "Messiah", substituting "Son of Man". Jesus might have deliberately used an expression that the apostles would hear as, "Days will come when you **too** will wish to see one of the **Days of the Messiah**, etc." The apostles were heavily influenced by the teachings of the scribes. See Matthew 17:10-13 about the Elijah to come. And see Luke 21:5-7 about the apostles' astonishment that the temple would be destroyed.

Luke 17:22-23 is confusing. For one thing, the Son of Man is, strictly speaking, "one like unto a Son of Man" in Daniel 7. He was in heaven and like a human, and therefore not human. Yet Jesus sometimes called himself "the Son of Man" while a human. In the verses that follow and elsewhere in Luke's writings, Jesus equates his earthly life with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. The Suffering Servant really was a man, a son of man. After reading some commentaries, I became convinced that the phrase "the days of the Son of man" means all the days when Jesus, the fulfillment of the Son of Man of Daniel, was visible. Most of those days were during the public teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. "The days of Noah" and "the days of Lot", also mentioned in Luke 17, mean the days when Noah and Lot were alive. The confusing difference with "the days of the Son of Man" is that he died and would be resurrected, to appear later after an interval of many years. So "the days of the Son of man" are not consecutive like normal lifetimes are. Verses 24-25, which follow, say something similar in another obscure manner. Verse 25 means that the Son of Man of Daniel 7 would die. Verse 24 means that the same Son of Man would return one day. After the Son of Man's death, his disciples would desire to see a single one of the days of the Son of Man[45]. That is, they would desire to see Jesus alive again for just one day. After Jesus's death, his disciples would hear rumors that one person or another on earth was about to save Israel (verse 23).

Jesus was telling his disciples about a future time when they would vainly hope for the enthroned Son of Man prophesied in Daniel 7:13-14 to return and free them from oppression, including the oppression by the Romans prophesied in Daniel 7:25.

---

45 As translated by Richard Francis Weymouth, in *The Modern Speech New Testament* (New York, 1902). This is in accordance with the emphatic meaning of the Greek word for one (*μιαν*). Luke 15:8 and 16:17 both use *μιαν* [= *mian*] for the word "one".

Neither the disciples nor the Pharisees grasped that their situation under the Romans was going to get worse before it got better. Christians must not follow false Christs in the wilderness (that is, must not follow warlords like the sons of Mattathias[46]). Fighting the Romans before God had ordained the end of the Gentile Times would be fighting against God[47]. If the Son of Man had wanted to deliver Jerusalem, he would have done it miraculously like God did by means of his angel in 2 Kings 19:35 against Sennacherib.

**Luke 17:24-25.** Accordingly, Jesus says in verses 24 and 25:

> for as the lightning, when it lighteneth out of the one part under the heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall the Son of man be in his day. But first must he suffer many things and be rejected of this generation.

Jesus meant that the Son of Man of Daniel 7, the savior his disciples longed for, would be heavenly, not from anywhere on earth. He would be effortlessly visible for all to see at some future time, so nobody needed to look for him.

The Pharisees who had asked Jesus when the kingdom of God was going to come in verse 20 wouldn't have understood what Jesus said because their interpretation of Scripture was so different. So I will digress. Contrary to the expectations of the disciples and the Pharisees, the Son of Man had to be rejected first. That's how he was going to get to heaven: by rejection followed by suffering followed by death followed by resurrection. Jesus called himself the "Son of man" (Luke 22:48). He also identified with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 in Luke 22:37, saying:

> For I say unto you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in me, And he was reckoned with transgressors: for that which concerneth me hath fulfilment.

Jesus was quoting Isaiah 53:12, which says in the Thomson translation of the LXX:

---

46 See 1 Macc. 2:27-31. Also, 2 Macc. 5:27 Douay: "But Judas Machabeus, who was the tenth, had withdrawn himself into a desert place, and there lived amongst wild beasts in the mountains with his company: and they continued feeding on herbs, that they might not be partakers of the pollution."

47 Luke mentioned a warlord similar to Judas Maccabaeus in Acts 21:38: "Art thou not then the Egyptian, who before these days stirred up to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins?"

> Because his soul was delivered up to death and he was numbered among transgressors and bore away the sins of many and on the account of their iniquities was delivered up;

Luke also wrote about the death of the Suffering Servant in the passage about the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:32-33:

> Now the passage of the scripture which he was reading was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before his shearer is dumb, So he openeth not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: His generation who shall declare? For his life is taken from the earth.

That passage that Luke quoted is similar to the reading of Isaiah 53:7-8 in the Septuagint. And Philip explained that those words were about Jesus. So when Jesus said about the Son of Man:

> But first must he suffer many things and be rejected of this generation,

he was alluding to Isaiah 53 and also to Daniel 7:13. The Suffering Servant was going to die. The Son of Man was going to ascend to heaven. And the Suffering Servant was the Son of Man of Daniel 7.

It would have never occurred to either the Pharisees or to Jesus's disciples to interpret Daniel 7 in the light of Isaiah 53. Jesus didn't get these ideas from the scribes or from personal study, but from God. It might be a waste of time to try to figure out how Jesus derived his unusual interpretations from the Scriptures. These new Christians teachings could be called mysteries in Biblical Greek, and sacraments in Biblical Latin, but with different meanings from how those words are used today. Those words referred to revealed truths that you learn from God, or learned after joining a religion. A revealed truth is a mystery (*μυστηριον*), a secret unknown to anybody else, a religious secret. *Mysterion* and *sacramentum* are sometimes translated "secret" in the Bible. The Parkhurst Greek lexicon gives a lengthy explanation of mysteries in the Biblical sense, under the entry *Μυστηριον, ου, το*.[48] Peter understood that Jesus was the Christ of the Hebrew Scriptures, not because he figured it out by diligent study, but because this secret or mystery was revealed to him

48 A Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament, etc. … 7th edition, by John Parkhurst (London, 1817.) The Latin Vulgate routinely translates *mysterion* with *sacramentum*, but Latin writers, both pagan and Christian, used the word differently. So a Latin lexicon's entry for *sacramentum* doesn't help to understand *mysterion*.

by God (Matthew 16:17). And Jesus told the apostles not to tell anybody (Luke 9:21), which is how you should behave when you are told a secret.

**Luke 17:26-37.** Then Jesus says in Luke 17:26-37:

> And as it came to pass in the days of Noah, even so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise even as it came to pass in the days of Lot; they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but in the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all: after the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he that shall be on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not go down to take them away: and let him that is in the field likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to gain his life shall lose it: but whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. I say unto you, In that night there shall be two men on one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. There shall be two women grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. And they answering say unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Where the body *is*, thither will the eagles also be gathered together.

If Jesus was thinking specifically of salvation in just one city, he may have been thinking of Jerusalem. He specifically threatened Jerusalem with destruction in other verses, and it should be assumed that God would save any righteous people in the city, on the basis of Abraham's argument with Jehovah in Genesis 18. But what if Jesus was not thinking specifically of Jerusalem? Luke 10 suggests that other cities besides Jerusalem would suffer God's wrath, but suffer it differently. Jesus suggested that some righteous people would be saved in the different cities where the 70 disciples preached, in Luke 10:16, saying:

> He that heareth you heareth me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me rejecteth him that sent me.

History does not tell us whether there were any supernatural salvations in these cities about the time of the one-day sudden manifestation of the Son of Man predicted in Luke 21:27-28.

Luke wrote both his gospel and Acts after Christianity had spread to the gentiles. It is interesting that Jesus made a reference so many years before about saving non-Jews from the whole world, just as non-Jews were also saved in the days of Noah. As Luke 21:34-35 says, that day would "come upon all them that dwell on the face of all the earth". The Pharisees mentioned in verse 20 would have been surprised at these words of Jesus.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, who were in gentile country, that they expected to be taken up into the clouds to meet Christ (1 Thess. 4:17). Paul discussed the resurrection in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Some of the Corinthian Christians must have been gentiles. Maybe this resurrection happened on the day of the heavenly manifestation of the Son of Man. Of course, I don't know anything that is unrecorded in history. And I don't know anything that happened invisibly in heaven.

When they first followed Jesus, the disciples, like the Pharisees, might not have been able to conceive of the resurrection of gentiles, like gentile Christians in Thessalonica and Corinth. They thought that gentiles had to obey the Law of Moses (Acts 15). They might not have been able to conceive of a resurrection outside of Judea. To Luke and Paul, the salvation of the gentiles was a fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant (Acts 3:25, Romans 4, Galatians 3), not of the prophecies in Daniel. Luke made more references to Abraham than the other gospel writers[49].

Luke 21 describes the destruction of Jerusalem. Next, it also describes the anguish of gentiles in the entire world. The salvation, redemption, or deliverance of Christians is mentioned in Luke 21:28.

Jesus expected few to be saved. Jesus couldn't use some previous salvations and destructions as types. The salvation of Jerusalem from Sennacherib's army was not a fitting type because so many Israelites were saved. Jesus knew that Jerusalem was

---

49 Zacharias expected the salvation of Israel from its enemies from the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 17:2-19, 22:16-18), not just from the prophets (Luke 1:72-75). Jesus said that a woman that he cured deserved freedom from Satan's bonds on the basis of being a daughter of Abraham (Luke 13:16). Jesus said that salvation had come to Zacchaeus's house because he was a son of Abraham (Luke 19:9). Paul told the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia that God had sent them the word of salvation because they were of the stock of Abraham. Luke also made references to Abraham in Luke 3:8, 13:28, 16:22-30, 20:37, and Acts 7.

so wicked that the only question was whether anybody at all there deserved to be saved.

Showing doubt whether any righteous people would be found when the Son of Man came, Jesus said in Luke 18:8:

> … when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?[50]

A heavenly creature resembling a man was called Jehovah in Genesis 18:13[51]. Genesis 18:2 says that three “men”, one of whom was later called Jehovah (18:13), and two who were later called angels (19:1), appeared to Abraham (18:1-2). The man who was called Jehovah told Abraham that “the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah was great" (18:20). Jehovah intended to inspect the city and to destroy it, if he discovered that Sodom and Gomorrah were really wicked. The heavenly being that Genesis calls Jehovah went to heaven, from where he later rained down fire and brimstone (18:33; 19:13, 24). The two others, the angels, went to search for righteous people (Gen. 18:22, 19:1). When the angels got there, the kingdom of God was “within” or “in the midst of” the Sodomites, so to speak, even though the Sodomites and even Lot's sons-in-law thought they were only men. They discovered that Sodom really was as wicked as had been reported to Jehovah and rescued a few righteous people, who could barely be considered righteous[52]. Even though none of Lot's family is reported to have been on a housetop or in a field at the time of the angelic salvation, the references to the housetop and to the field might nevertheless be references to the salvation by the angels at Sodom because the next sentence mentions Lot's wife (Luke 17:32). Salvations like this could have occurred before the redemption or deliverance that was prophesied in Luke 21:27-28.

---

50 This passage is reminiscent of the time when Abraham begged God not to destroy Sodom if only 10 righteous people were found in it (Gen. 18). But Jesus wonders if even one righteous person would be found when he returns to deliver the righteous.

51 The Hebrew text contains the tetragrammaton, not the Hebrew word for "lord".

52 Lot's sons-in-law thought Lot was joking, so they were left behind (Gen. 19:14). The angels had to lead Lot, his wife, and his two daughters out by hand to get him to leave (verse 16). Instead of obeying what he was told to do, Lot begged to be allowed to go to Zoar (verses 18-22) instead of the mountain. His wife disobeyed and looked back (verse 17) and became a pillar of salt (verse 26). His daughters, because of their lack of faith, committed incest with their father and became the ancestors of two evil nations, the Moabites and Ammonites (verses 31-36).

**Luke 17:37.** Angels can find the righteous anywhere in a manner that defies human comprehension, just like in the days of Lot. Leonard Chappelow[53] translated a passage from Bochart about eagles that said that the Arabians say hyperbolically: "She can see a dead carcase at the distance of sixteen hundred miles, or, four hundred parasangs."[54]

Chappelow wrote on pages 386-387 of volume 2:

> — *And her eyes behold afar off.* By being so high advanced; and by that wondrous perfection, which is peculiar to her, of having an exceeding quick flight; she is not confined to any small, narrow prospect; but is able to extend her view far and wide. The country round about her, tho' of very large dimensions, is her own at one single glance: for there are no limits of any moderate distance, but what she easily surpasses. Wherever the carcase happens to be, it must be strange indeed if she does not discover it.

Matthew 24:28 had said:

> Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

Matt. 24:31, three verses later, explains the comment about eagles in verse 28:

> And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

If I used Matt. 24:31 for interpretation, the answer to the question in Luke 17:37 ("Where, Lord?") might be "from one end of heaven to the other", possibly meaning that the angels will be everywhere on earth. But I think it is better to interpret the

---

53 See bibliography. The first quotation is from page 543 of Volume 1. He correctly translated the Latin word *quadringentis* as *four hundred*. At least one other English commentary says "forty parasangs" as if Bochart had written *quadraginta*. But he didn't.

54 Bochart wrote in Latin: "Est acerrimi visus, ita, ut cadaver videat a quadringentis parasangis." This is from page 756 in the book *Hierozoicon: sive De animalibus S. Scripturae*, Volume 2 (1663). Bochart has a chapter called "Aquilae alae, volatus, nidus, visus, victus" ("The Wings, Flight, Nest, Vision, Food of the Eagle"). The chapter has several pages containing dozens of quotations from ancient literature, showing the opinions of the ancients about the eagle. The quotations in Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic are translated into Latin.

question using Luke 17:34-35. That is, Where would these men in the bed and women grinding together be? In Sodom? Or, Where was Noah at the time of the flood? And the answer means: “The angels will scent out and find the righteous wherever they are in the world no matter how few they may be”. I will add more about how angels are like eagles in another chapter.

## How Angels Are Like Eagles.

The phrase about the eagle in Luke 17 may have been inspired by Job 39:27-30, which says:

> Is it at thy command that the **eagle** mounteth up, And maketh her nest on high? On the cliff she dwelleth, and maketh her home, Upon the point of the cliff, and the stronghold. From thence she spieth out the prey; Her eyes behold it afar off. Her young ones also suck up blood: And **where the slain are, there is she**.

But some commentators think that Jesus based his comment on a proverb, not the scripture. Commentators differ over whether the text should say "eagles" or "vultures", and whether it should say "body" or "carcass". I think that Luke meant precisely what he wrote, "eagles" and "body". Luke corrected Matthew in this verse, and Jesus really meant body (*σωμα*), not carcass (*πτωμα* in Matthew). Jesus might have adapted the scripture (or proverb), using a noun that could apply to live bodies. The apostles would have detected and understood the alteration of the scripture or proverb. Jesus probably only meant to bring up the idea of a heavenly creature that can find a body from far away in a way that is impossible for man. He thought his disciples would instantly understand his words to mean: “You know that eagles can sense their prey from far away and swiftly fly to it. The angels can also see and swiftly fly to the righteous man on a bed and to the righteous woman grinding, just like they flew to Lot.” J.K. Burr wrote in a footnote in his 1879 commentary on Job 39:29 (page 257):

> **29. Her eyes behold afar** — Homer accords to the eagle the keenest vision of all birds. (*Iliad*, xvii, 674.) Similarly, Horace, "sharp-sighted as an eagle." — *Satire* I, iii, 27. The Arabs have a proverb, "More quick sighted than

the eagle," and they say, hyperbolically, that she can see a carcass at the distance of forty parasangs, or about one hundred and fifty miles[55].

Deuteronomy 28:49 also refers to the long-distance flight of the eagle saying:

> Jehovah will bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand … .

Likewise, the Son of Man's heavenly angels can swiftly find God's people when in distress in order to save them, wherever they are on earth. The message is similar to that of Matthew 24:31.

Angels and eagles are heavenly. They both have superhuman abilities. They can both find bodies at great distances. Eagles are associated with salvation. God said in Exodus 19:4:

> Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

Jehovah used similar language in Deuteronomy 32:10-11 about rescuing the Israelites from the Egyptians:

> He found him in a desert land, And in the waste howling wilderness; He compassed him about, he cared for him, He kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle that stirreth up her nest, That fluttereth over her young, He spread abroad his wings, he took them, He bare them on his pinions.

A similar thought is expressed in Deut. 30:3-4, where God promises a miraculous individual salvation for repentant Israelites after their dispersion:

> then Jehovah thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the peoples, whither Jehovah thy God hath scattered thee. If *any of* thine outcasts be in the uttermost parts of heaven, from thence will Jehovah thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: … .

---

55 From A Commentary on the Book of Job Intended For Popular Use, by Rev. J.K. Burr. (New York, 1879). Burr must have gotten his information from Bochart, like Chappelow, and thought that *quadraginta* (40) was the right reading instead of *quadringentis* (400).

Alfred Nevin listed three explanations of Luke 17:37 in his commentary on Luke[56], number 3 of which is close to the truth:

> This proverb, as used by Him, has received a great variety of interpretations, of which the following are the most important: 1. As eagles find out, and gather round a carcass, see Matt. xxiv. 28, so, wherever wicked men are, the judgments of God will pursue them. 2. The Roman armies (which had eagles upon their standards) shall gather for the destruction of the guilty city of Jerusalem, whose moral condition is represented by a *carcass*, as ravenous birds collect upon their prey. 3. Wherever Christ's professing Church, which is "His body," is, there the angels shall gather together at the last day, (Matt. xiii. 49,) and make the separation between the wicked and the just, which, as is said in the three immediately preceding verses, shall take place at our Lord's appearing.

The quotation above cites Matthew, but not Luke. And it prefers Matthew's translation "carcass". But I insist that Luke knew every word in Matthew and Mark, and that when he deviated from either it was for a reason. Luke wrote the most authoritative gospel. If Jesus had actually compared eagles to the judgments of wicked men or to Roman armies, as in two explanations mentioned above by Nevin, Luke would have known this and put the comparison in the section about the judgments of the wicked (Luke 21:21-26). Luke chapter 17 and Luke 21:27-28 are about the salvation of Christians. The angels in Luke 17:37 rescue live bodies of Christians, not carcases. Luke 21:27-28 probably foretells this same rescue by eagle-like angels of live Christians.

## The Meaning of the Darkness of the Sun and Moon.

I am trying to write this book in a logical manner, but have had to make digressions. Up to this point I have mentioned that Jesus addressed the four apostles in Luke 21 until verse 21. I commented on Luke 21:21-24, which is all spoken about the Jews who were to suffer God's vengeance. I had to dwell at length on the abomination of

56 Commentary on the Gospel according to Luke, by Alfred Nevin. (Philadelphia, 1868).

desolation in Luke 21:20 and also on the times of the Gentiles in Luke 21:24 because they are misunderstood. Then I covered Luke 17:20-37. The reason for that lengthy digression was that Luke moved certain verses in Mark 13 and Matthew 24, verses that were wrongly included in Jesus's speech. So I had to interrupt the flow of the book to explain Luke 17 to show the kind of miraculous salvation that Jesus actually predicted for believers.

Now I need to resume my explanation of Luke, specifically of Luke 21:25-27, which verses are about terror felt in the whole word. Luke explains that the language in Matthew and Mark about the darkness of the heavenly bodies is figurative. I will show that elsewhere in the Hebrew Scriptures the darkness of the heavenly bodies is usually also figurative. Luke knew that. Even to this day some interpreters, not understanding Luke, wrongly think that eclipses and other heavenly oddities are signs of the end.

According to William Guthrie's translation (1752), one of Cicero's letters to Atticus[57] said that the sun seemed to have fallen out of the universe:

> The whole Scene is now changed, and so are my Sentiments. The Sun … seems to be extinguished in the System of the World. As there are Hopes while there is Breath in the Body of a sick Man, so I continued still to hope, while *Pompey* remained in *Italy*.

Cicero had sided with Pompey against Caesar. Then he discovered that Pompey planned to destroy Rome by sending in an invasion of foreign armies, and also by causing a famine by means of a blockade to keep Rome from getting grain[58]. So Cicero lost all hope, and as a result there seemed to be no light in Italy.

Joseph Willard wrote:

> And here we may observe, that darkness and light are frequently used in a metaphorical sense, in the holy Scriptures. Darkness is put for trouble, perplexity and calamity. Thus Joel speaking concerning the famine and other judgments under which the Israelites labored, calls the season, “A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness.” And Zephaniah prophesying of the judgments of God, which were coming upon

57 From "Epistle 10 to Atticus". See bibliography.

58 According to the interpretation of Thomas De Quincey on pages 39-43 of Historical and Critical Essays, Volume 2 (Boston, 1853).

> Judah, says concerning the time when they should fall upon them, “That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.” These and many other passages make it evident that darkness is sometimes used in the Holy Scriptures metaphorically for trouble and calamity; and it is with propriety thus used. In days of public calamity how distressing is sometimes the prospect? Which way soever we look, trouble and melancholy appear, and gloom is apt to seize upon and overwhelm the mind as darkness in the night involves the body[59].

The writer of the quotation above said that darkness is put for trouble and calamity. This is metonymy, the use of another noun instead of the noun really meant. I think that, in order to figure out what darkness means in a given Scripture, you should look for the literal language that is used as its synonyms. Willard cited Zephaniah. Zeph. 1:14-17 reads:

> The great day of Jehovah is near, it is near and hasteth greatly, *even* the voice of the day of Jehovah; the mighty man crieth there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm, against the fortified cities, and against the high battlements. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against Jehovah; and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as dung.

Several figures of deprivation of light are used in that passage: "darkness and gloominess", "clouds and thick darkness", and "blind men". This figurative language is mixed with literal language: "a day of trouble and distress", "a day of wasteness and desolation". "Darkness" probably means "distress" in this passage.

Amos 5:18-20 says:

> Woe unto you that desire the day of Jehovah! Wherefore would ye have the day of Jehovah? It is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house and leaned his hand on the

---

59 "A Thanksgiving Sermon Delivered at Boston December 11, 1783, to the Religious Society in Brattle Street, Under the Pastoral Care of The Rev. Samuel Cooper, D.D. by the Rev. Joseph Willard, A.M. President of the University in Cambridge" (Boston, 1784.)

> wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of Jehovah be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?

A footnote in a commentary[60] on Amos 5:20 says:

> **Darkness** – A picture of calamity and distress (compare Joel ii, 2, 31; iii, 15; Isa. v, 30; viii, 22, etc.). **Light** – A picture of prosperity and salvation.

Amos 5:18–19 contains synonymous parallelism of two figurative expressions, a metaphor about the darkness of the Day of Jehovah and a simile about running away from beasts to explain the metaphor. Unfortunately, there is no literal language used in parallel (words like "calamity" or "distress") to make us sure of the meaning. We have to figure the meaning out by understanding the simile and then comparing the metaphor to it. Alexander Carson explained that metaphors are, in their literal sense, absurdly false, but similes are true[61]. (If the day of Jehovah were truly dark, it would not be a metaphor.) The simile uses "as if", a conjunction of comparison: "**As if** a man did flee from a lion." If a day were really as dark as night, your efforts to escape would be ill-fated like the escape of a blind man. The man who ran from the lion into a bear and then got bit by a snake as soon as he thought he was safe was likewise making a doomed effort to escape. These figures of speech illustrate Amos's prophecy against the 10-tribe Kingdom of Israel, namely, that Jehovah will send an avenger from whom the Israelites won't be able to escape, and they will go into captivity (Amos 5:1, 27).

Amos 8:9-10 says:

> And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord Jehovah, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day. And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning for an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day.

A figurative sentence, an absurdly false statement, is followed by a literal sentence explaining the meaning of the figure. The original readers understood immediately that

---

60 Commentary on the Old Testament Vol. IX. – The Minor Prophets, by Frederick Carl Eiselen, (New York, 1907).

61 Page 441 of "A Treatise on the Figures of Speech", included in The Works of the Rev. Alexander Carson, Volume 5, (Dublin, 1863).

God was not going to literally make the sun go down at noon. The real meaning of the hyperbole is the sudden end of all joy in Israel and the beginning of mourning. This was part Amos's prophecy against Samaria, the 10-tribe kingdom (Amos 8:14).

The figurative darkness in several passages above refers to the condition of terrified, hopeless men. Despite some difference in the precise interpretation, the fact that these passages are metaphors describing fright, distress, etc., is clear from the context. Commentators shouldn't say that Amos 8:10 is a prophecy that God will make the sun literally darken at noon (as Archbishop Ussher did), because Amos provides the meaning to the careful reader. Many commentators have said that the sun and moon will be literally darkened in the end times because of their incorrect interpretation of Matthew.

There are some passages in the Bible where an eclipse or smoke might be the cause of darkness. But there are many more scriptures where the figure of darkness is used in contexts where there is no suggestion of an eclipse or smoke. So the reader should be inclined to assume that the darkness is metaphorical.

## Metaphors Combining the Sun, Moon, and Stars.

This chapter continues a digression about the metaphor of darkness in the Bible. Mark 13:24-25 says:

> But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens shall be shaken.

Revelation 6:12-13 is similar. Some scholars think that the clause about stars falling from heaven is derived from a denunciation of Edom in Isaiah 34:4:

> And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fade away, as the leaf fadeth from off the vine, and as a fading *leaf* from the fig-tree.

In his comments on Isaiah 13:10, Albert Barnes says[62]:

62 Notes: Critical, Explanatory, and Practical on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah with a New Translation, by Albert Barnes, in Three Volumes. Volume 1 (Boston and New York, 1840).

> 10. *For the stars of heaven*. This verse cannot be understood literally, but is a metaphorical representation of the calamities that were coming upon Babylon. The meaning of this figure evidently is, that those calamities would be such as would be appropriately denoted by the sudden extinguishment of the stars, the sun, and the moon. As no calamity could be greater than that; nothing would tend more to anarchy, distress, and ruin, than thus to have all the lights of heaven suddenly and forever quenched, this was an apt and forcible representation of the awful calamities that were coming upon the people. Darkness and night in the Scriptures are often the emblem of calamity and distress. See Note Matt. xxiv. 29. The revolutions and destructions of kingdoms and nations are often represented in the Scriptures under this image; and any great calamity is illustrated in this manner. So respecting the destruction of Idumea.

The metaphors of Mark, Matthew, and Revelation may have originated by combining Isaiah 34:4 with Isaiah 13:9-10. Isaiah 13:9-10 reads:

> Behold, the day of Jehovah cometh, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger; to make the land a desolation, and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in its going forth, and the moon shall not cause its light to shine.

Maybe Jesus appropriated recognizable metaphors from Isaiah which were originally directed against Babylon and Edom. This would be reasonable, since Rome was also an enemy of Israel. I will later show that Luke 21:25-27 refers to the gentiles who experienced sudden terror after seeing the Son of Man in heaven.

Moses Stuart wrote[63]:

> So when, in the oriental writers, the sun is represented as darkened, the moon is obscured, and the stars as shaken, these are *images of distressing times*; and therefore, when it is said that these things will happen, the simple meaning is, that times of great distress will follow, in which, as it were, all nature seems to threaten to ruin.

---

Digitized by Google.

63 From an appendix to Elements of Interpretation, Translated From the Latin of J.A. Ernesti, etc., by Moses Stuart (Andover, 1822).

Albert Barnes wrote in his commentary on Matt. 24:29[64]:

> The images here used are not to be taken literally. They are often used by the sacred writers to denote *any great calamities*. As the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars, would be an inexpressible calamity, so any great catastrophe, any overturning of kingdoms or cities, or dethroning of kings and princes, is represented by the darkening of the sun and moon, and by some terrible convulsion in the elements. Thus the destruction of Babylon is foretold in similar terms (Isa. xiii. 10); and of Tyre, Isa. xxiv. 23. The slaughter in Bozrah and Idumea is predicted in the same language, Isa. xxxiv. 4. See also Isa. l. 3; lx. 19, 20; Ezek. xxxii. 7; Joel iii. 15. To the description in Matthew, Luke has added (ch. xxi. 25,) "there should be distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." All these are figures of great and terrible calamity. The roaring of the waves of the sea denotes great tumult and affliction among the people. *Perplexity* means doubt, anxiety: not knowing what to do to escape. *Men's hearts should fail them for fear*, or by reason of *fear*. Their fears would be so great as to take away their courage and strength.

Moses Stuart and Albert Barnes reasoned like Luke. Besides them, some late Latin writers gave good explanations of the metaphors about the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars (Cornelius a Lapide's comments on Matt. 24:29 and on Isaiah 13:10 and 34:4, and also Jacobus Tirinus's comments on Isa. 13:10 and 34:4). In the next chapter I will begin to explain precisely how Luke derived and constructed the verse in Luke 21 that Barnes referred to in the quotation above.

---

64 See bibliography. Ecclesiastes 12:1-2 says: "Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth … before the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars, are darkened." In context, the darkness is caused by the failure of sight in old age. But it doesn't make any sense to apply that meaning to other scriptures that mention the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars.

## Luke 21:25-26 Is a Complicated Substitute for Matthew 24:29-30 or Mark 13:24-25.

Luke rewrote Matthew 24:29-30 (or Mark 13:24-25) with an allusion to Isaiah 5:30 (from a Greek version) having a similar meaning to the darkening of the moon, sun, and stars. He paraphrases Isaiah 5:30 and even adds a clause of interpretation. The clause of interpretation that Luke inserted shows that Jesus was talking about metaphorical darkness (anguish), not literal darkening of the heavenly bodies. If anybody interprets the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars in Matthew 24 or any other similar scripture literally, he is ignoring Luke[65]. Furthermore, some authors have agreed with some of my opinions in this chapter. For example, John Chrysostom (born A.D. 347?) said that the darkness of Isaiah 5:30 is metaphorical, signifying fear, although he didn't associate that passage with Luke. Cornelius a Lapide (17th century) called the darkness of Isaiah 5:30 a hyperbole and referred it to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, thus agreeing with Luke that the darkness is not literal.

**I show below how Luke derived three different parts of Luke 21:25-26 from verses in Matthew and Isaiah:**

**Luke 21:25:** "And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars;" This is directly from Matthew 24:29: "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven". And it is ultimately from Isaiah 13:10: "For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in its going forth, and the moon shall not cause its light to shine."

**Luke 21:25-26:** "… and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world:" This is from a Greek version of Isaiah 5:30, which reads in Brenton's LXX: "And he shall roar on account of them in that day, as the sound of the swelling sea; and they shall look to the land, and, behold, *there shall be* thick darkness in their perplexity."

---

65 I think that the words in Mark 13:24-25 are the original words of Jesus, derived from Isaiah 13:10. Also, the birth-pain or travail of Mark 13:8 may be derived from Isaiah 13:8. Compare Luke 23:30 ("say to mountains, Fall on us") with Isaiah 2:21.

**Luke 21:26:** "… for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." This is directly from Matthew 24:29: "… and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:" And it may be ultimately from Isaiah 34:4: "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fade away, as the leaf fadeth from off the vine, and as a fading *leaf* from the fig-tree."

Luke 21:25-26 reads:

> **And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars**; [and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world:] **for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken**.

The words I typed in bold above represent Matthew 24:29. Even though the words in Matthew are close to the very words of Jesus, Luke didn't want to copy the misunderstood language word for word. The three kinds of heavenly phenomena have the same meaning anyway. The words inside brackets include a rewording of part of Isaiah 5:30 and also Luke's own explanatory comments.

**Isaiah 5:30 and Luke 21:25 both refer to the roaring of the sea, to the distress of nations on earth, and to darkness.** Luke wrote in Greek. His choice of words reflects the Septuagint or another Greek version. I will use bold type, underlining, brackets, and angular quotation marks below to show the parts of the verses that correspond to each other.

- Isaiah 5:30 (Bagster LXX): *Και βοησει δι αυτους τη ημερα εκεινη, ως φωνη θαλασσης κυμαινουσης και εμβλεψονται εις* ***την γην****, και ιδου σκοτος σκληρον εν τη* <u>*απορια*</u> *αυτων.*
- Luke 21:25 (Greek Tischendorf text): *Και εσονται σημεια εν ηλιω και σεληνη και αστροις, και επι* ***της γης*** *συνοχη εθνων εν* <u>*απορια*</u>*, ηχους θαλασσης και σαλου.*
- Isaiah 5:30 Brenton: And he shall roar on account of them in that day, as [the sound of the swelling sea]; and they shall look to **the land**, and, behold, there shall be thick «darkness» in their <u>perplexity</u>.
- Luke 21:25 ASV: And there shall be «signs in sun and moon and stars»; and upon **the earth** distress of nations, in <u>perplexity</u> for [the roaring of the sea and the billows];

The land of Isaiah 5:30 is the earth in Luke 21. There is no difference. It was the English translator's choice whether to render *γην* and *γης* as "land" or "earth". The two Greek nouns are spelled differently because the prepositions that govern them required different declensions. The phrase "upon **the earth** distress of nations" in Luke 21 was inspired by the words "**the land**, and, behold, there shall be thick darkness in their perplexity" in Isaiah 5. The word *απορια* (distress) also occurs in both Isaiah and Luke. I explain in another chapter that when Luke says "distress of nations", he is explaining as a commentator what the words "their perplexity" mean in Isaiah 5:30. Luke interprets the genitive plural *αυτων* (= "of them", or "their") as *εθνων* (= **of the nations** or **of the gentiles**). To help Theophilus, Luke eliminated the ambiguous pronoun in Isaiah, substituting the noun that the pronoun signified.

Luke used a different Greek phrase for "the roaring of the sea" than the Septuagint. Maybe he used a different Greek translation. Septuagint translators have translated the phrase in Isaiah 5:30 differently: "the sound of the swelling sea" (Brenton LXX), "the roaring of the billowy sea" (Thomson LXX), "and the voice of a surging sea" (Ottley LXX).

**Isaiah 5:26-30 refers to gentile domination of Israel followed by an abrupt reversal of fortune.** Luke referred to Isaiah 5:30. He knew its context. Isaiah 5:26 (Brenton LXX) says:

> Therefore shall he lift up a signal to the nations that are afar, and shall hiss for them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they are soon coming quickly.

God had promised to do this in Deuteronomy 28:49 (Brenton LXX):

> The Lord shall bring upon thee a nation from the extremity of the earth, like the swift flying of an eagle, a nation whose voice thou shalt not understand;

Isaiah 5:27-29 shows how fierce the army would be. The soldiers would roar like lions and carry away Judah as prey, with none to deliver (Judah). This is reminiscent of Deut. 28:49-52.

Deut. 30:7 says that a time would come when the circumstances of Israel and of its persecutor would reverse:

> And Jehovah thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, that persecuted thee.

**Isaiah 5:30 contains psychological figurative language.** It describes the fear the gentile kingdom would have when it suddenly realized that its fortunes had reversed. Isaiah 13:8 LXX Brenton explains the emotional reaction of the Babylonians when Deut. 30:7 would be fulfilled upon them:

> The elders shall be troubled, and pangs shall seize them, as of a woman in travail: and they shall mourn one to another, and shall be amazed, and shall change their countenance as a flame.

Belshazzar the king of Babylon saw the handwriting on the wall when he was relaxed, having a feast. Dan. 5:6 shows his emotional reaction:

> Then the king’s countenance was changed in him, and his thoughts troubled him; and the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.

Dan. 5:30 says:

> In that night Belshazzar the Chaldean King was slain.

Isaiah 5:30 is a metaphorical description of the terror and sadness of the gentiles when they see that they are going to change from being the subjugators to being the subjugated. And the reference to Isaiah 5:30 in Luke 21:25 has a similar meaning for the time when the gentile conqueror would see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and glory.

Luke's phrases in 21:25-26 "fainting for fear", and "for expectation of the things which are coming on the world" are Luke's explanation of the figurative language in Isaiah 5:30. The word "perplexity" was already in Isaiah 5:30, but Luke added the causes of the perplexity to explain it, "fear" and [frightened] "expectation". Luke gave essentially the same explanation for the figurative language as some commentators that I quoted above, but in few words. Luke was explaining in unadorned prose the meaning of the metaphorical language in Isaiah 5:30, which is the same as the meaning of Matthew 24:29-30. The metaphors from nature simply describe the emotional state of the people, unbearable fear. Luke added this because Theophilus, for whom he wrote, might have misunderstood the figurative language[66]. The figurative

---

66 I repeatedly say that Luke tailored his gospel for Theophilus, because Luke and Acts are addressed to Theophilus. Luke 1:3 seems to say that Luke wrote this gospel for Theophilus. But if Luke did his original research in Palestine before he knew Theophilus,

language was ultimately from Hebrew, not from Theophilus's native Greek, and it might have been archaic or obsolete even then.

John Chrysostom[67] explained the psychological meaning of Isaiah 5:29-30. I will translate his words the best I can below:

- **Chrysostom**: 29. Impetu feruntur ut leones, et adstiterunt ut catuli leonum. Et apprehendet, et clamabit quasi fera, et ejiciet; et non erit qui liberet eos.
- My translation: 29. They are impelled by fury as lions[68] and they stood near as the whelps of lions. And he will seize, and he will cry out as a wild beast, and he will cast [them] out; and there will be nobody to deliver them.
- **Chrysostom**: 30. *Et clamabit propter eos in die illa, sicut vox maris aestuanti. Et aspicient in caelum sursum, et in terram deorsum: et ecce tenebrae durae, tenebrae in angustia eorum.* … Ideo leonibus illos comparat, neque in hoc exemplo substitit, sed effingit vocem et impetum ferae, inque metaphora insistit, multaque utitur figurata dictione.
- My translation: 30. *And he will cry out on account of them in that day, as the sound of the billowing sea. And they will look into the heaven above, and into the earth below; and behold! A hard[69] darkness, darkness in their perplexity.* …

---

maybe he tailored his gospel for the people he preached to. Luke might have even corrected the passages of Mark and Matthew that he himself had previously misunderstood. One reason for thinking that Luke's gospel existed before he wrote Theophilus's copy is that he expected Theophilus to understand Luke 21:25-27. I think that only very studious Jewish Christians would understand that section. Another reason is that he didn't explain the expression "Son of Man". Yet another reason for accepting an earlier date of composition of Luke's gospel is that 1 Corinthians 11:25 seems to refer to it.

67 From "In Isaiam", part of Sancti Patris Nostri Joannis Chrysostomi, Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani, Opera Omnia Quae Exstant, etc., Tomus Sextus (Paris, 1835).

68 The word *feruntur* is probably from *ferri* plus the ablative of the things carried away by or impelled by, a common construction. Ottley, Brenton, and Thomson differ in their translations of the LXX from Greek to English.

69 Chrysostom is using the LXX here. The Greek word *σκληρον* does mean hard, but is not normally applied to darkness. The same is true of *durae*, the word used in the Latin translation of Chrysostom. But Brenton, Ottley, and Thomson translated "thick", "cruel", and "distressful" darkness, instead of translating literally as "hard darkness".

And so he compares them to lions, and does not stop in that comparison[70], but portrays the voice and fury of the wild beast, and remains in the metaphor, and uses much figurative language[71].

- **Chrysostom**: Hinc ad mare sermonem traducit, dicens tantum fore tumultum, tantam perturbationem, quanta fuerit insaniente et aestuante pelago: ac modis omnibus annititur ut metum augeat, ut illi non egeant ipsa rerum experientia. Quodque gravius est, nemo adfuturus est, inquit, neque ex terra, neque ex caelis; sed destituti superno auxilio, et terrena ope, tradentur hostibus.
- My translation: After this he turns the discussion[72] to the sea, saying [that there is] going to be as much tumult, as much perturbation, as there will have been [when] a sea [is] raging and billowing. He takes pains to amplify fear in every way, so that they do not need the experience of the events, itself. And what is more grievous, nobody is going to help, says he, neither from land nor from the heavens; but having been forsaken of help from above, and [also of] terrestrial help, they will be handed over to enemy hosts.

---

70 "Exemplum" does not really mean "comparison". The hardest part of the Latin sentence is the word "exemplum". The word should mean "[warning] example", based on the Latin translator's use of the word. "Warning example" doesn't make sense in the translated sentence. Based on other similar sentences in the Latin version, Chrysostom's meaning is this: Isaiah didn't just compare the invaders to lions, but added details to scare the hearer more.

71 Crooks: MULTUS, a, um, *adj*. w. *comp*. (plus) & *sup*. (plurimus). **I.** *Sing*. — **1) Much, great, considerable,** labor, aurum, cura, libertas; m. sermo, *much conversation;* … .

72 *Traduco* + *sermonem* must mean to change the subject or to shift the conversation, even though *transfero* + *sermonem* means to change the subject according to lexicons. *Traduco* is sometimes used as a synonym for *converto*, as for example in this passage from Cicero: "Tum omnem orationem traduxi et converti in increpandam Caepionis fugam." Cicero was changing the subject from Caius Norbanus to Caepio. A passage by Theodoret of Cyrus on Jer. 49:20-23 says that Jeremiah, after finishing prophesying about Idumaea "traducit sermonem ad Damascum". He is changing the subject or changing the direction of the discussion from Idumaea to Damascus. I couldn't find a lexicon with a translation for *traduco* + *sermonem*. Translators of Cicero's orations render paraphrases of what they think Cicero must have meant instead of giving literal translations.

- **Chrysostom**: Tenebras autem hîc dicit eas, quae ex calamitate ipsis immissae sunt[73], non quod radii solis sublati essent, sed quod pro affectu patientium in meridie illi pro luce tenebras viderint: id quod illis qui dolore et aerumnis premuntur contingere solet.
- My translation: But here he calls “darkness” that which was sent upon them because of the calamity, not that the rays of the sun were withdrawn, but that they saw darkness instead of light at noon because of the emotion of [people who are] suffering, which is accustomed to happen to those who are oppressed by sorrow and hardships.
- **Chrysostom**: Et ut discas non ex natura aeris tenebras provenisse, sed ex illorum affectu, adjecit: *Tenebrae durae in angustia eorum*.
- My translation: And so that you would learn that the darkness did not originate from the nature of the air, but from their emotion, he added: "Hard darkness in their distress."

I agree with Chrysostom in the passage above where he says that the darkness of Isaiah 5:30 was not natural, but rather “the emotion of [people who are] suffering, which is accustomed to happen to those who are oppressed by sorrow and hardships”. This is what Luke's explanatory comments meant in Luke 21:25-26. As I said before, Luke inserted explanatory phrases with words from Isaiah 5:30. Luke interjected his own interpretation so Theophilus wouldn't misunderstand.

Cornelius a Lapide also explained the psychological meaning of darkness in his comments on Isaiah 5:29-30 (Vulgate)[74]:

- **Cornelius a Lapide**: 30. *ET SONABIT] Magno sonitu & impetu irruet Titus cum Romanis super eum, scilicet populum Iudaeorum. ET LUX OBTENEBRATA*

---

73 The plural verb is for *quae (= tenebrae)*. The verb is passive here. The active construction is *immitto* + the accusative of the affliction + the dative of the people afflicted. Deut. 28:48 Sabatier: *servies inimico tuo, quem inmittet tibi Dominus, in fame, & siti, & nuditate, & omnium penuria: & ponet jugum ferreum super cervicem tuam, donec te conterat. =* Douay: "Thou shalt serve thy enemy, whom the Lord will send upon thee, in hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put an iron yoke upon thy neck, till he consume thee."

74 *Commentaria in Isaiam Prophetam*, part of *Commentaria in Quatuor Prophetas Maiores*, by Cornelius a Lapide (Antwerp, 1634).

*EST] Est hyperbole, q.d. Prae magnitudine vastitatis & tribulationis, etiam lux ipsa miseris & attonitis Iudaeis obscura, & nox esse videbitur*.

- My translation: AND HE WILL ROAR[75]] with a great noise and fury, Titus will rush with the Romans upon it, namely, [upon] the nation of the Judeans. AND LIGHT IS DARKENED] It is a hyperbole, as if he would say: Because of the greatness of the devastation and tribulation, even light itself will seem [to be] dark and [to be] night to the miserable and thunderstruck Judaeans.

I agree with his comment that light being darkened is not literal, and that it means that light would just seem to be dark and night to miserable and stunned people.

When Isaiah 5:30 says darkness and distress, the darkness, being a metaphor, is the distress.

## Who Is in Perplexity in Isaiah 5:30?

I showed in the last chapter that Luke 21 refers to Isaiah 5:30. I will use the Septuagint to show who was in perplexity, because Luke seems to have used a Greek text, not the Hebrew text, which is very different. Most English translations are from the Hebrew text. Here is Isaiah 5:30 Brenton LXX:

> And he shall roar on account of them in that day, as the sound of the swelling sea; and they shall look to the land, and, behold, there shall be thick darkness <u>in their perplexity</u>.

Here is Luke 21:25 ASV:

> And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth <u>distress of nations, in perplexity</u> for the roaring of the sea and the billows;

Compare the Tischendorf Greek text of Luke 21:25:

> *Και εσονται σημεια εν ηλιω και σεληνη και αστροις, και επι της γης <u>συνοχη εθνων εν απορια</u> ηχους θαλασσης και σαλου*

Who was in perplexity in Isaiah 5:30? It just said "in <u>their</u> perplexity" [*εν τη απορια αυτων*], with an unspecific pronoun. Luke defines the ambiguous pronoun by saying

75 Yet, as I explain elsewhere, Luke thought that God, not Titus, would “roar.” And Luke thought that the darkness would be seen by the enemies of the Jews, not the Jews.

"distress of nations, in perplexity". Luke substituted a genitive plural noun for the pronoun, that is, *εθνων*, meaning "of the nations", for *αυτων*, meaning "of them", or "their". The nations are the gentiles. A careful reading of all of Luke 21 shows that the nations, or gentiles, were the *εθνων* of Luke 21:25. The same word for "nations" is used in verse 10 (*εθνος επ εθνος*: "nation shall rise against nation"), verse 24 (*εθνη*: "shall be led captive into all the nations"), twice again in verse 24 (*εθνων*: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled"). The English translator has to make the choice whether to translate *εθνος* as "nation" or "Gentile". The word means "nation" but often means "non-Jewish nation" in the Bible, the adjective "non-Jewish" being suppressed, that is, not written but understood. The word "nation" is not used a single time for the Jews in Luke 21. When an English translator says "Gentiles", he means "Gentile [nations]", the word "nations" being subauded, that is, untranslated but understood. (The word "gentile" is actually derived from the Latin word for "nation", but never includes Jews in English. Despite the etymology, it means "non-Jewish nations".) The word "nations" in Luke 21 is used in the unfavorable way that non-Jews are described in the Book of Daniel, namely, as foreign enemies and conquerors of the Jews. Luke 21:24, the verse with three occurrences of the word "nation" or "gentile", refers to Daniel 7:23 and 25, which verses are about a terrifying, trampling beast, which beast symbolized a gentile king or kingdom.

I am writing unusual explanations. So I will summarize the thinking of my book: Luke corrected and explained Mark and Matthew to write a new gospel. Therefore, Luke's gospel abounds in explanations. He substitutes one term for another, like "armies" for "abomination of desolation", and like "times of the nations" for "a time and times and half a time". He interjects explanations in the midst of passages that otherwise resemble Mark and Matthew. (See Luke 21:21). That is what he did here. Luke 21:25-26 began as something like this part of Matthew 24:29-30:

> **… [the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven,] [and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven:] …**

Luke 21:25-26 reads:

> **[And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars;]** [and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows;] [men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world:] **[for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.]**

If you separate the part of Luke 21:25-26 that originated in the corresponding passage in Matthew, what you have left are a reference to Isaiah 5:30 as well as explanatory comments, authored by Luke, and interjected into Matthew 24:29-30 to explain what Jesus meant. Luke knew that the metaphors about the failure of the heavenly bodies (originally probably from Isaiah 13:9-10 and 34:4) were likely to be taken literally. Economizing on words, Luke referred to, but did not quote Jesus's actual words as recorded in Matthew. Likewise, he referred to, but did not quote, Isaiah 5:30, which has a similar figurative meaning. (In my last chapter, I showed that Chrysostom and Cornelius a Lapide agreed that Isaiah 5:30 uses a metaphor that is not to be taken literally, and which portrays great fear.) Then Luke wrote the meaning of that passage from Isaiah. That was the same as the meaning of the signs in the sun, moon, and stars: "men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world". Then Luke finished the section with words like those in Matthew. Theophilus recognized that Luke 21:25-26 was essentially Matthew 24:29-30. He recognized that the figurative language about the darkness of the sun and the moon was left out, and that their figurative meaning was explained. Jesus actually used Isaiah 5:30 in his speech. This was not something extra added by Luke. But it was, to appearances, left out of Matthew 24 and Mark 13. Yet it was not entirely left out of Matthew. I say elsewhere in this book that the clauses that complete Matt. 24:30 ("and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory") probably originated as a reference to Isaiah 5:30. Luke might have gotten the idea of including the reference to

Isaiah 5:30 either from a gospel that is no longer extant, or from a passage that fell out of Mark, or from Matt. 24:30.

The readers of the Septuagint would have misunderstood the pronouns in Isaiah 5:30. Brenton translated the verse as follows:

> And he shall roar on account of them in that day, as the sound of the swelling sea; and **they** shall look to the land, and, behold, there shall be thick darkness in **their** perplexity (*απορια αυτων*, LXX).

The reader of the Septuagint would have thought that the antecedent for the word "their" is the preceding "they". That is, the reader of the LXX would think that those who look to the land will be in perplexity. The pronouns are the same in Ottley's translation from the LXX[76]:

> And he shall roar because of them, in that day, as the voice of a surging sea; and **they** shall look upon the earth, and behold, cruel darkness in **their** dismay (*απορια αυτων*, LXX).

But the Septuagint is wrong[77]. Surprisingly, Luke shows that the antecedent for the pronoun "their" is "the earth", meaning "the nations of the earth".

Notice that Ottley translated "the earth" where Brenton translated "the land".[78] English translators usually prefer to say "earth" in Luke 21:25.

Judea did suffer distress, but Luke 21:25-26 is talking about the distress of the gentile world[79]. So according to Luke 21:25, the nations, the gentiles, the non-Jews, would be in distress and in perplexity (*απορια*): "upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity." Luke gives the reason for this as "the roaring of the sea and the billows", which is yet another reference to Isaiah 5:30. Luke explains in plain language that

---

76 Isaiah According to the Septuagint (Codex Alexandrinus), translated and edited by R.R. Ottley (London, 1904.)

77 The pronoun is singular in Hebrew. I will explain this later.

78 Ottley provided a Hebrew and also a Greek translation on alternate pages in his book.

79 Luke 21:23 says that Judea would undergo distress, using a different Greek word (*αναγκη*). It is clear from the surrounding verses that verse 23 refers to Judea and it can be inferred that verse 26 refers to the nations. Judea endures distress till the Gentile Times are ended and the Son of Man appears in heaven, at which time the gentiles endure distress.

[gentile] men would "faint for fear and expectation of the things which are coming on the **world**." Luke got that information from the words of Isaiah 5:30: "… and they shall look to the **land**, and, behold, there shall be thick darkness in their perplexity." The land or earth (*της γης*) is the land of the nations or gentiles (*εθνων*). Luke calls it "the world".

But if we read Isaiah 5 alone without comparing it with Luke 21, we would probably agree with many commentators who believe that the Jews, not the gentiles, were in perplexity. The previous verse, Isaiah 5:29, says that the gentile invaders "roar like lions" in some translations. Then verse 30 speaks of roaring again, in some translations. Even though the word "land" (*γης*) probably refers to Judea in Luke 21:23, I am saying that the same word means the part of the earth where gentiles live in verse 25. This is contrary to the reader's expectation, because for Isaiah 5:30 to mention distress of gentiles requires it to suddenly change the subject from the distress of the Jews to the distress of the nations[80]. Some commentators have insisted that "the earth" in Luke 21:25 refers to Judea. I eliminated a chapter that refutes them. But I will mention here that Luke, in his gospel and also in Acts of the Apostles, frequently uses the same Greek word translated "earth" or "land" to refer to gentiles. Cornelius a Lapide incorrectly said that Isaiah 5:30 was about the distress of the Judeans (in a quotation above). Chrysostom also incorrectly referred that passage to the Jews, saying that they looked to the land as well as to the heavens for help but found none. Those comments sound reasonable, but they disagree with Luke.

## The Sound of the Sea Causes the Perplexity of the Gentiles in Luke 21:25.

Young's Literal Translation translates Luke 21:25:

> And there shall be signs in sun, and moon, and stars, and on the land is distress of nations with perplexity, sea and billow roaring;

---

80 It is not surprising that God would immediately turn against a nation that he had used to punish Israel, or that the reversal of circumstances would happen suddenly. See Deut. 30:7, Isaiah 13 and 14, Daniel 7:25-27, Isaiah 47:9, Rev. 18:8, and Jeremiah 50. Isaiah 5 is not clear to the modern reader, and needs an interpreter. I have confidence in Luke's interpretation.

This translation, the KJV, and some others, do not say that the sea and the waves **caused** the distress of nations. Luke wouldn't have approved of those translations. Alfred Plummer said on Luke 21:25[81]:

> **εν απορια ηχους**[82]. All English Versions prior to RV. go astray here, but Wic. and Rhem. less than the rest, owing to the Vulgate: *in terris pressura gentium prae confusione sonitus maris et fluctuum*. Tertullian is better: *in terra angustias nationum obstupescentium velut a sonitu maris fluctuantis (Adv. Marc.* iv. 39). It is the nations who are "*in* perplexity *at* the resounding of the sea and surge[83]." Figurative language of this kind is common in the Prophets: Is. xxviii. 2, xxix. 6, xxx. 30; Ezek. xxxviii. 22; Ps. xlii. 7, lxv. 7, lxxxviii. 7. See Stanley, *Jewish Church*, i. p. 130.

The Rhemish Version (Douay) of Luke 21:25 that Plummer mentioned reads:

> And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars: and upon the earth distress of nations, **by reason of**[84] the confusion of the roaring of the sea, and of the waves.

Plummer is saying that the Vulgate correctly translated *εν απορια ηχους* as *prae confusione*, showing causation. Plummer referred to the Wycliffe version, which is hard to read, since it is in Middle English. In modern English, one of the Wycliffe variants reads: "**for** the sound of the sea and of the waves". The preposition "for" shows causality. Wycliffe got the English right because the Vulgate had gotten the Latin right. Plummer quotes a Latin passage from Tertullian above, which I translate as follows: "on earth, perplexity of nations, being stupefied as if **from** the sound of an undulating sea". In Plummer's quotation, Tertullian used the Latin preposition "*a"* plus a noun in the ablative case, *sonitu*. This is the ablative of cause. Plummer approved of the Revised Version, which reads like the American Standard Version: "in perplexity

---

81 An Exegetical Commentary On the Gospel According to S. Matthew, by Alfred Plummer (New York, 1910).

82 Page 484. See Bibliography.

83 Notice that Plummer agrees with what I said above, that the nations (not the Jews) are in perplexity.

84 The Douay translates "by reason of" from *prae*. *Prae* is also translated as a preposition of cause in the Douay in Gen. 29:20 ("because of the greatness of his love"); 1 Macc. 6:8 ("for grief"); 3 Kings 14:4 ("by reason of age").

**for** the roaring of the sea and the billows". The preposition "for" in those versions is a causal preposition, like "because of".

Isaiah 5:30 does not clearly state that the roaring of the sea caused the darkness and distress of nations on earth. But that is how Luke understood it.

## God Will Growl and Look Upon the Earth (Isaiah 5:30).

The majority of English translations say “they shall roar” instead of “he shall roar” as in the LXX. Commentators often acknowledge that the pronoun is singular in Hebrew. Because the pronoun is singular, Young's Literal Translation says:

> And **it** howleth against it in that day as the howling of a sea, And **it** hath looked attentively to the land, And lo, darkness — distress, And light hath been darkened by its abundance!

The singular number makes more sense for both of the pronouns that I use bold type for above. One reason is that Luke already explained that the nations on the earth were in distress and perplexity. If we were to substitute the word "nations" for the pronoun "they" in Isaiah 5:30 in the Septuagint, we would have “the nations have looked attentively to the earth”. But I have already shown elsewhere that "earth" = "the world", the abode of the gentiles, according to Luke 21:25-26. It doesn't make sense to say that the nations would look at themselves. Here is Ottley's translation from the Septuagint, with a singular pronoun:

> And **he** shall roar because of them, in that day, as the voice of a surging sea; and **they** shall look upon the earth, and behold, cruel darkness in their dismay.

And here is Ottley's translation from Hebrew, also with a singular pronoun:

> And in that day **he** shall growl over him, as the growling of the sea; and if **one** look unto the earth, behold darkness, distress, and light; it groweth dark in the heavens thereof.

Like YLT, Ottley's translation from Hebrew uses a singular pronoun for the one looking to the earth. The first pronoun in bold in Ottley's translation from Hebrew is not very controversial since the translators who say "they shall roar" have to admit that they are taking liberties with the Hebrew text, which has a singular verb. Ottley correctly said "he shall" roar (or growl) in the first part of the verse (instead of "they"),

both when translating from Greek and from Hebrew. It is easy to understand why he did that, since the verbs under discussion are singular both in the LXX and in the Hebrew text.

But the second pronoun in bold type in Ottley's Hebrew translation is controversial. In this chapter I maintain that the pronoun should be singular, and that it probably means God, i.e., “if God should look upon the earth”. Here is a footnote on the verse from J. Skinner[85]:

> **30.** Apparently an image of the land in the throes of the invasion. The verse, which presents many difficulties, may read somewhat as follows: **And he shall growl over him in that day like the growling of the sea, and if one look to the earth, behold darkness of distress (and the light is dark) in its clouds.** The text is probably in some disorder. The words in brackets are wanting in the LXX. The first clause is generally interpreted of the growl of the invader over the prostrate land; some, however, understand it of the voice of Jehovah (the thunder) moving overhead and directing the attack. The latter part of the verse has a general resemblance to viii. 22; the words "look to the earth" seem to require some such antithesis as "look up" in viii. 21.

Those referred to by Skinner who say that the first pronoun refers to Jehovah might be right. Yet I do not agree with them that God is directing an attack. I am saying that Luke interpreted the passage unlike any other commentator. Jehovah is causing the gentiles to feel like they are in a tempest, like the one described in Acts 27. The metaphor of a tempest is just like the metaphor of the sun and moon darkening. It is a metaphor of losing hope. In fact, according to Acts 27:20 the crew on Luke's ship didn't see the sun or stars for many days and lost hope:

> And when neither sun nor stars shone upon *us* for many days, and no small tempest lay on *us*, all hope that we should be saved was now taken away.

That sentence actually does use exaggeration or hyperbole, since the seafarers probably did get a little light from the sun and stars. But the sentence was intended as literal prose, because there really was a tempest, and it really was unusually dark.

Most of the passages in the Bible about the darkening of the sun and moon are clearly metaphorical. The earliest readers interpreted them that way. The language

---

85 The Book of the Prophet Isaiah Chapters I. — XXXIX. With Introduction and Notes, by the Rev. J. Skinner. From the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (Cambridge, 1896).

about the roaring of the sea in Isaiah 5:30 is the same kind of metaphor. The men in Isaiah 5:30 felt as hopeless as the men in the literal tempest in Acts 27. Luke explains the entire meaning of the metaphor in Luke 21:26: "men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world". Isaiah 5:30 could have swapped metaphors, eliminating the metaphor of a tempest, and substituting the common metaphor of the darkness of heavenly bodies: “God will darken the sun and the moon.” The meaning would have been the same: they were scared and had lost all hope.

Skinner said above that the passage could be rendered:

> And he shall growl over him in that day like the growling of the sea, and if one look to the earth, behold darkness of distress (and the light is dark) in its clouds.

"If one look to the earth" makes sense. Then the clause would be almost equivalent to saying: “There will be darkness and distress”, etc. But "If He [God] looks to the earth" makes sense, too. Jeremiah 4:23-27 ASV uses similar language:

> I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was waste and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved to and fro. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful field was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of Jehovah, *and* before his fierce anger. For thus saith Jehovah, The whole land shall be a desolation; yet will I not make a full end.

In the passage above, Jeremiah prophetically looks at the land and sees that it is waste and void, and a desolation. The heavens had no light, were without birds, and were black. This is similar imagery to what is used in Isaiah 5. Jeremiah could have condensed these verses by eliminating the metaphors and simply writing that Jehovah had said: “I am angry, so I will cause the land to become desolate.” Jeremiah, after seeing a vision from God, says that he looked down and saw that the earth was a desolation in the verses quoted above, and Jehovah says that he is himself the cause of the darkness and desolation according to Jeremiah 4:28:

> For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black; because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and I have not repented, neither will I turn back from it.

In the verse above, like in Isaiah 5:30, God has caused men to feel hopeless, as if they had no light. So they mourn. Isaiah 5:30 makes sense whether it is translated "if one look to the earth" (like Skinner did) or translated "if He (God) looks to the earth".

Skinner said:

> … the words "look to the earth" seem to require some such antithesis as "look up" in viii. 21.

That is a common opinion. If a translator of Isaiah 5:30 becomes influenced by Isaiah 8:21, the result will be similar to Charles Thomson's translation of Isaiah 5:30, in his 1808 translation of the Septuagint:

> On that day he will roar against them like the roaring of the billowy sea; and they will look upwards to the heaven and down on the earth, and lo! distressful darkness in their tribulation.

But Charles Thomson was apparently influenced by texts that were corrupted by a deliberate harmonization with Isaiah chapter 8[86]. Despite what Skinner said, the words "look to the earth" don't require an antithesis such as is found in Isaiah 8:21-22. I quoted a passage above from Jeremiah where Jeremiah looks down at the earth and sees darkness. There is no looking up as an antithesis to looking down in that passage.

Luke's reference to this passage in Isaiah is immediately followed by verse 27:

> And then shall **they** see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

The antecedent for "they" in Luke 21:27 is the men of the world in the preceding verse. Luke probably thought that the clause "he shall roar on account of them in that day" (in the Septuagint) meant that the same God who removed the hedge from Judea (Isaiah 5:5) in order to allow days of vengeance (Luke 21:22), would roar like a swelling sea against the gentiles after the Gentile Times were over (Luke 21:24). The

---

86 Charles Thomson was probably following a different LXX text than Brenton, or maybe the suggestions of Robert Lowth. See Isaiah: A New Translation; with a Preliminary Dissertation, and Notes, etc., 3rd edition, (Perth, 1793.) Lowth cites some LXX manuscripts and a Coptic manuscript, the readings of which included both looking upwards and downwards. Chrysostom's LXX in ancient times also spoke of looking upwards and downwards.

terrified reaction of the gentiles is explained in Luke 21:25-26. Luke 21:27-28 shows what God would do after he "roared on account of them"[87] (= on account of his people): to wit, God would send the Son of Man in a cloud with power and great glory to save his people who had been mistreated by the gentiles.

So, Luke may have understood Isaiah 5:30 this way:

> And God shall roar against the gentiles in that day, as the sound of the swelling sea; and God shall look to the land, and, behold, [there shall be] thick darkness in the gentiles' perplexity.

It is not clear from either Isaiah 5 or Luke 21 how God would make the terrifying metaphorical tempest[88]. Sennacherib's metaphorical tempest was the destruction of his army in one night by an angel. Belshazzar's metaphorical tempest began when he saw the handwriting on the wall and ended that night when he was slain. Pharaoh had a metaphorical tempest when he suffered his own end by sudden, unexpected divine actions. Luke 21 only explains that the gentiles would be distressed after the Gentile Times had ended and just before the Son of Man came to save the faithful Christians (Luke 21:27-28.) The nations might have been distressed just by seeing the Son of Man coming in the clouds (as Jehovah's general or agent). But maybe they were also distressed by previous events.

By speaking of signs in sun, moon, and stars in Luke 21:25, Luke communicates to Theophilus that he is explaining the already famous passages in Mark 13 and Matthew 24 about the darkening of the sun and moon. Luke makes it clear with explanatory comments that those passages refer to the distress and perplexity of the nations, not of the Jews. Luke makes it clear that these heavenly signs are not literal, but rather they signify distress. The metaphorical figures about the sun, moon, and stars in Isaiah 13 and 34 meant the same as the darkness in Isaiah 5:30. There are

---

87 Isa. 5:30 LXX Brenton. Also, Chrysostom's Latin translation reads *propter eos.*

88 The meaning of verses 25-28 may be that the gentiles look up and see the Son of Man coming in a cloud as a king. They know they are going to lose rulership and probably be killed. So they are afraid. But the disciples are exhorted to look up because the same sight in the heavens that terrifies the gentiles is joyful to them. According to Luke 24:4-5, when some disciples were frightened by a supernatural sight, they looked down, not up. They bowed down their faces to the earth. The Book of Revelation may have been correct. The gentiles may have been astonished upon witnessing a resurrection of martyrs (Rev. 11:11-12).

too many clues relating Luke 21:25 to Isaiah 5:30 to ignore them. And the simplest way to harmonize Isaiah 5:30 with the rest of Luke 21 is my explanation above.

## All the Tribes of the Earth Shall Mourn (Matthew 24:30).

Matthew 24:30 identifies those who would mourn upon seeing the Son of Man in heaven: "all the tribes of the earth". Luke omitted the passage and identifies the mourners in Luke 21:25-26, which latter passage is based on Isaiah 5:30, Isaiah 13:10, and (possibly) Isaiah 34:4.

The second half of Matthew 24:30, Mark 13:26, and Luke 21:27 read so similarly that they all seem derived from the same original. Two clauses in Matthew 24:30 appear to unnecessarily duplicate each other in meaning. That is, the clause

> and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven

seems too similar to the subsequent clause in the same verse,

> and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

A clause in Matt. 24:30 about the sign of the Son of man appearing in heaven does not appear in Mark or Luke. The passage is not self-explanatory. Even though the first-mentioned suspicious clause, and also the clause attached to it about the tribes of the earth mourning, almost make sense, there is something wrong with them. This would be no surprise since Luke corrected some errors and moved other verses out of Matt. 24 to other speeches given at different times (e.g., Luke 12 and 17).

Surprisingly, the first half of Matt. 24:30 actually harmonizes with Luke 21:25-26 according to the analysis of Isaiah 5:30 that I presented previously. Those passages in Luke simply mean that God is going to cause all the gentiles to lose hope. Matt. 24:30 says the same thing without obscure metaphorical language: “all the tribes of the earth will mourn”. I will break up the verses for comparison below to show that the first half of Matt. 24:30 occupies the same place in the eschatological discourse as Luke 21:25-26.

- **Matthew 24:29:** But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven,

**Luke 21:25:** And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars;

- **Matthew 24:30** (first half): and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn,

**Luke 21:25-26:** and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world:

- **Matthew 24:29:** and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

**Luke 21:26:** for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

- **Matthew 24:30** (second half): and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

**Luke 21:27:** And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

- **Matthew 24:31:** And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

**Luke 17:24, 33, 34, and 37** (explained elsewhere in this book)

I think that Luke knew that Matt. 24:30 referred to Isaiah 5:30 and didn't like the reading. So he chose different words to more accurately convey what Jesus had really said. Matt. 24:30 = Luke 21:25-26. The sight of the Son of Man, and maybe also certain preceding events, causes the distress that the nations have in Luke and also in Isaiah 5:30. The distress of nations in Luke and Isaiah is the mourning of all the tribes of the earth in Matthew.

Matthew doesn't explain what he means by "the sign of the Son of man" in this verse. Luke omitted the phrase from Jesus's prophecy about the destruction of the temple;[89] Luke 21:27 said that the nations would see the Son of Man (not just a sign of him) come in a cloud.

If the words "the sign of the Son of man" were substituted for "the Son of man" because of an early copyist's error, then the first half of Matt. 24:30 would have been originally correct and would harmonize better with Luke and Isaiah:

---

89 See my chapter on Luke's correction of Matthew 12:38-42. In Luke, Jesus may have authorized the use of the expression "the sign of the Son of man". But in Luke, the expression does not just mean the sight of the Son of Man in heaven, like in Matt. 24:30.

and then shall appear ~~the sign of~~ the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn,

## Correction of Matthew 12:38-42.

Matthew 12:38-42 reads:

> Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, Teacher, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet: ~~for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.~~ The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

Luke objected to the sentence which I struck through above. He knew it was not part of the conversation under discussion. So he left it out of his gospel. Luke substituted an extra sentence, which I will put in bold below. Luke 11:29-32 reads:

> And when the multitudes were gathering together unto him, he began to say, This generation is an evil generation: it seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah. **For even as Jonah became a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.** The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and shall condemn them: for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here.

Mark 8:12 says: "And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this

generation." The verse contradicts Matthew and Luke. I have elsewhere shown other remnants of missing sections of Mark (Mark 13:37 and Mark 16:12-13). This is probably still another. Anciently, that verse must have included "except for the sign of Jonah". In fact, the entire section under discussion might have been in Mark originally, either as written in Matthew or as written in Luke.

The sentence added by Luke might be the actual words of Jesus, or they might be an explanatory transition to the subsequent verses. Luke objected to the section as written in Matthew because Jesus didn't actually explain what the sign of Jonah was on that occasion when the Jews asked for a sign. The disciples didn't understand anything about the sign of Jonah and the three days until it was explained in Luke 24:18-24 (ASV). A disciple named Cleopas says to an unrecognized stranger:

> … Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem and not know the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel. Yea and besides all this, **it is now the third day** since these things came to pass. Moreover certain women of our company amazed us, **having been early at the tomb; and when they found not his body,** they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. And certain of them that were with us went to the tomb, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.

Cleopas knew that Jesus was not "in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights", as stated in Matthew, but for less than three days. Jesus's body was missing on the third day, not on the fourth day. The stranger, who turned out to be Jesus, told him and his companion (in verses 25-27):

> And he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? And **beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.**

So the disciples didn't understand how the sign of Jonah applied to the Son of Man till Jesus explained the scriptures to them. The explanation in Matthew is anachronistic.

Jesus opened the minds of other disciples to understand the scriptures (including the section of Jonah about being swallowed by the big fish and the Suffering Servant section of Isaiah). This is related in Luke 24:45-49:

> **Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.** Ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.

The reader of Luke is supposed to notice that, until the end of Luke's gospel, even the most prominent disciples of Jesus didn't understand what the sign of Jonah was. The first part of the sign was the fact that Jesus was going to be entombed before getting resurrected on the third day, and the second part was the fact that they would preach "unto all the nations". The nations included gentiles like the Ninevites and the inhabitants of Sheba, which were mentioned by Matthew. It was a miracle that the sinful, uncircumcised Ninevites listened to Jonah. And it was a miracle that gentile nations repented and became Christians as a result of preaching in the name of the Christ.

The Jews asked for a sign in the sense of a miracle. The sign of Jonah was a miracle because he was as good as dead, but came back to life, so to speak. Another sign or miracle is that Jonah, amazingly, brought the gentile city of Nineveh to repentance. The sign of the Son of Man was a sign in the sense of a miracle because he arose from the dead. And the preaching that he guided from heaven, as explained in Acts of the Apostles, was accompanied by miracles and also obtained miraculous results among the diaspora and among the gentiles.

Luke said that Jesus really did tell the disciples about the Son of man being destined to "be delivered up to the hands of men" in Luke 9:44. To understand that revelation, they would have had to apply the Suffering Servant prophecy to the Son of Man in Daniel. Then they would understand that the Son of Man was destined to be killed before he ascended to heaven. Yet verse 45 says, "But they understood not this

saying, and it was concealed from them, that they should not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask him about this saying." And, in Luke 18:31-33, Jesus did in fact apply the Suffering Servant prophecy and the three-day entombment to the Son of Man. But he didn't mention Jonah by name. And verse 34 adds: "And they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them, and they perceived not the things that were said." The disciples didn't understand any of this until Jesus "opened their mind that they might understand the scriptures", as related in the final verses of Luke's gospel. Luke had a chance to copy Matthew and say "as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Luke could have added a comment that the disciples just didn't understand. But Luke omitted the verse because it was unhistorical.

## Some Scholars Who Ignore Luke Accept a Late Date of Composition of Daniel.

My book is about Luke, and about how Luke's explanations affect the interpretation of the Book of Daniel. But Luke has been outcompeted. People look to the Books of the Maccabees to interpret the abomination of desolation and the time periods in Daniel, not to Luke.

Scholars who accept a late date of composition for the Book of Daniel believe that the book was written in Judea during the times of Antiochus Epiphanes by an unknown author who pretended to be the Daniel who lived in Babylon hundreds of years before.

*A Dictionary of the Bible* described a common view in the year 1911 in its entry called "Daniel, The Book of" (page 552 of Volume I). I will quote from it, preserving its typography and italics:

> The visions (chs. 7-12) are represented as given in the words of Dn ($7^2$ $8^1$ $9^2$ $10^2$), hence the inference that he wrote the entire book. This was the ancient Jewish opinion, and the prevailing Christian one, until within recent years. Now, however, it has generally been abandoned, and in its place are quite a variety of views all agreeing in this, that the book *in its present form* must be assigned to the age of Antiochus Epiphanes (B. C. 175-163); and

there is a growing consensus of opinion that the book as a whole belongs to that period … .

Samuel Driver wrote about the Book of Daniel in the book, An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament[90]. In that chapter, between his discussions of chapters 6 and 7 of Daniel, he devoted more than a page to the years and chief events of the reign of Antiochus, between B.C. 176 and B.C. 165, giving many references to 1 and 2 Maccabees and to supposedly parallel passages in Daniel. After his summary of all twelve chapters of Daniel, he said:

In face of the facts presented by the Book of Daniel, the opinion that it is the work of Daniel himself cannot be sustained. Internal evidence shows, with a cogency that cannot be resisted, that it must have been written not earlier than c. 300 B.C., and in Palestine; and it is at least *probable* that it was composed under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, B.C. 168 or 167.

The quotations above are only a little over 100 years old. In the third century, Porphyry also taught a late date of composition about the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. Here is an example of Porphyry's Maccabean[91] interpretation on Daniel 11:34, translated by Nathaniel Lardner[92]. I will preserve some of the old-fashioned use of quotation marks:

'By 'the little help' Porphyry supposes to be intended Mattathias, of the town of Modin, who rebelled against the generals of Antiochus, and endeavored to uphold the worship of God. He calls it,' he says, 'a little help,' 'because Mattathias was killed in battle, and afterwards his son Judas, called Maccabaeus, fell also: and his brothers were imposed upon by the treachery of their adversaries. Read the books of the Maccabees. All these things, as

90 Page 497 of the 1910 New Edition, in "Chapter XI. Daniel."

91 The word "Maccabean" is probably usually misused, since we only know that Judas the son of Mattathias was originally called “Maccabee” or “Maccabaeus”. But the titles of the books of the Maccabees suggest that Mattathias and his sons are Maccabees. When people speak of Maccabean times, they mean the time period covered by 1 and 2 Maccabees, not just the time when Judas Maccabaeus was alive.

92 Page 219 of Vol. 4 (1815), translated from Jerome's commentary on Daniel. Lardner dates the commentary to the year 410 or sooner on page 214.

he says, were therefore done, that the pious might be tried, and purified, and made white, to a certain time; because the victory was deferred to another time. … .'

Porphyry thought that the resurrection of Daniel 12 was figurative, not literal, and actually referred to the Jews' coming out of figurative sepulchres of affliction. He also mentioned a second explanation, that the resurrection was a metaphorical reference to the Jews' coming out of the caves that they literally hid in during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes[93]. Nathaniel Lardner provides the following translation from Jerome's commentary on Daniel 12:1-3[94]:

'… Then, says he, they who, as it were, “slept in the dust of the earth,” and were covered over with the weight of affliction, and were, as it were, buried in sepulchres, rose out of “the dust of the earth” to unexpected victory. The keepers of the law lifted up their heads out of the ground, rising to eternal life: and the apostates from it to “everlasting contempt.”[95] The masters and teachers, who understood the law, “will shine as the firmament,” and they who had exhorted the lower orders of the people to keep God's ordinances, “will shine as the stars for ever and ever.”[96] He also allegeth the history of the Maccabees, in which it is said, that many of the Jews fled into the deserts, and hid themselves in caves and holes of the rocks, and after the victory came out. This, he says, is expressed metaphorically, as if it were a resurrection from the dead.'

Anthony Collins revealed that he accepted Porphyry's basic thinking. I will quote him, keeping his use of italics:[97]

---

93 See 2 Macc. 10:6, which I quote elsewhere.

94 Lardner, page 221 of Vol. 4 (1815).

95 But that is not how Martha understood Daniel 12:1-3 (John 11:24.) Her opinion that the resurrection was literal was reinforced when she saw her brother resurrected (John 11:44).

96 Jesus lived about 200 years after Judas Maccabaeus. He disagreed with Porphyry and thought that the fulfillment of Dan. 12:3 was still future (Matt. 13:43).

97 Pages 151-2. The Scheme of Literal Prophecy Considered, etc., by Anthony Collins (London, 1727).

> Divers matters of fact are spoken of in the *book* of *Daniel*, in the way of prophecy, with the *clearness* of history, from *Daniel's* time to the times of *Antiochus Epiphanes* … Which *clearness* made *Porphyry*, (who is allowed by many learned men to have well understood and explained divers parts of *Daniel* … thinks *Daniel's* book to be written about the times of *Antiochus Epiphanes*: as the nature of things would determine any one to do, in respect to such *clear prophecies*: the existence whereof, before the event referred to by them, had no proof. The author appears to be well acquainted with things down to the death of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, but not further.

Anthony Collins's comments about the clearness of history were inspired by Jerome's commentary on Daniel. Lardner translates part of Jerome's prologue as follows:

> 'The twelfth book of Porphyry … was written against the book of the prophet Daniel: in which he says, that it was not written by him whose name it bears, but by another, who lived in Judea in the time of Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes: and that the book of Daniel does not foretell things to come, but relates what had already happened. In a word, whatever it contains to the time of Antiochus is true history: if there is any thing relating to after times, it is all falsehood: forasmuch as the writer could not see things future, but at the most only make some conjectures about them. … .'[98]

Anthony Collins was really only repeating that Porphyry *claimed* that the prophecies in Daniel were fulfilled up to the times of Antiochus. And Collins was strengthened in his belief because many learned men said that Porphyry had understood and explained different parts of Daniel. Not having most of the histories Porphyry used, neither Collins nor the many learned men could possibly have proven the fulfillment of those prophecies. Some of Porphyry's explanations of the clear prophecies were so bad that modern commentators who accept Porphyry's basic premise ignore them. I will give examples in a later chapter.

Anthony Collins thought that Onias of 2 Maccabees was the christ or messiah of Daniel 9.

> But I understand, in my paraphrase the term translated here *Messias*, of a person, whom I take to be *Onias*; who was the last of the *Messias's* or

98 Pages 214-5 of Vol. 4 (1815).

> *Anointed* High Priests, that were lawfully chosen, before the devastation made by *Antiochus*; and who was a most upright person, of great holiness, and taken off by an unjust death, just after the 62 weeks; as is plainly declared in *2 Mac. iv.* where his slaughter and the publick lamentation for him are remarkably described. *Harduin*, p. 596.[99]

William Whiston wrote about Richard Bentley, on page 95 of his *Memoirs* (1753). I will quote him, including the italics of the text:

> He aimed also to pick a quarrel with some small niceties in *Daniel's* chronology; and supposed the book to have been written after the time of *Onias*, the high priest; and that this *Onias* was *Daniel's Messiah*; and the slaughter of this *Onias* at *Antioch* was the *cutting off the Messiah. Dan. ix.* 26. 2 *Maccabees* ii. 34, 35. In short he was very desirous to get clear of the authority of the book of *Daniel*[100].

Notable people mentioned above, including Porphyry, Collins, and Bentley, believed that Daniel was written by an anonymous Jew centuries after the death of the real Daniel. If the Book of Daniel really was fraudulently written under those circumstances, it would logically follow that it could contain faked prophecies written after the supposed fulfillments. The events would have been fresh in mind. And the author of Daniel could have disguised the events as prophecy. But Daniel 11 is as clear as mud. And secular history of those times has been mostly lost. I show later in this book that neither book of the Maccabees should be used to interpret Daniel. Nor should Josephus.

---

99 Page 184.

100 Jesus didn't agree with Anthony Collins or Richard Bentley. He told the Samaritan woman that he was the Messiah (John 4:25-26). The mention of 2 Macc. ii. in Whiston's *Memoirs* appears to be a mistake for 2 Macc. 4.

## Other Scholars Who Also Ignore Luke Reject a Late Date of Composition of Daniel.

Hippolytus and Jerome both believed that Daniel himself wrote the Book of Daniel in Babylon, and that the book accurately prophesied the future. They also believed that the Book of Daniel foretold events described in 1 and 2 Maccabees. Another early-church writer, Ephraem the Syrian, wrote in his commentary on Daniel 11:31[101]:

> Et auferent sacrificium, immolationes nempe hostiarum, et panes propositionis. Et dabunt abominationem in desolationem, quam postmodum Machabaei sustulerunt.

Which I translate as follows:

> And they will take away the sacrifice, that is, the sacrificings of [sacrificial] hosts, and the loaves of proposition. And they will place there[102] the abomination unto desolation, which the Maccabees later took away.

Ephraem commented on Daniel 11:32-33 on page 330 of a Latin edition as follows:

> Et qui supergredientur, perdet illos. Pactum scilicet ipsius cornu loquentis magnifica (Antiochi). Populus autem illorum, qui noverunt timorem Domini, praevalebit contra adversarios suos, et Justi in Populo docebunt multos. Machabaeorum tempora designat, quibus Judaei impegere in tela, in ignes, in servitutem, bonorumque deriptionem diebus plurimis.

---

101 In Danielem Prophetam Explanatio, translated from Syriac into Latin by Petrus Benedictus, part of the volume, Sancti Patris Nostri Ephraem Syri Opera Omnia Quae Exstant Graece, Syriace, Latine, In Sex Tomos Distributa, etc.; Volume 2; Syriace et Latine (Rome, 1740).

102 I am following the Douay translation here. Petrus Benedictus imitated the Vulgate when translating from Syriac. He probably accepted the traditional incorrect interpretation of Dan. 11:31. The verb *dabunt* (= "they will give") is ultimately from Hebrew via Greek. I have a chapter in this book about the correct translation of Dan. 11:31 and also about the real meaning of "the abomination of desolation". Cornelius a Lapide, whom I quote elsewhere, said that "they will give" = "they will place" and that "abomination" = "idol". He said in Commentaria in Danielem Prophetam (Paris, 1622): *ET DABUNT (id est ponent) ABOMINATIONEM (id est simulacrum Jovis Olympii) IN DESOLATIONEM, — id est in templo desolato & profanato, ad omnimodam ejus desolationem.*

Which I translate below:

> And they who overstep [the covenant] − he will destroy them. The covenant: namely, of that horn speaking magnificent things, (of Antiochus)[103]. But the nation of those who know the fear of the Lord will prevail against their adversaries, and the just among the people will teach many. He is alluding to the times of the Maccabees, in which the Jews stumbled into weapons, into fires, into servitude and the despoiling of [their] goods for many days.

Ephraem frequently explained Daniel's prophecies by references to 1 and 2 Maccabees and other history from those times, as did Porphyry. In fact most traditional commentators both then and now believe that part of the Book of Daniel accurately predicted some events during the times of Judas Maccabaeus and his relatives. One goal of my book is to show that all such commentators are wrong, regardless of whether they believe the Book of Daniel was written by a real Daniel in Babylon who lived more than 500 years before Jesus, or whether they believe that Daniel was written by an unknown Jew at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.

James Hatley Frere traced the history of the interpretation of Daniel by the fathers of the church. He claimed that Jerome gave Porphyry more respect than he deserved. He said that subsequent Christian commentators, reading too much into Jerome's comments, felt obliged to acknowledge applications to Antiochus Epiphanes as types. There is enough truth in what he said to quote him:

> The error of commentators in universally misapplying Dan. xi. 21 - 30 to Antiochus Epiphanes has of course arisen from their having been led to continue the prophetic history of the sovereigns of the Grecian empire beyond the 19th verse, where it terminates with the death of Antiochus the Great. But also it is to be ascribed, in some measure, to the deficiency of authentic records concerning his times, which has occasioned the comment of Porphyry, corrupt as it is, to be referred to as a valuable historical document; so that it is observed by Scaliger, that "all we have upon Daniel we owe to St. Jerome, and he to Porphyry[104]." … Hence it arises that the

---

103 Ephraem means that the horn symbolizes Antiochus.

104 From "*Prologomena*" of *Opus de Emendatione Temporum*, by Joseph Justus Scaliger (Lugdunum Batavorum, 1598), which says: *Nam totam interpretationem obscurrissimi capitis xi illi debemus, ut testis est Hieronymus. Itaque absque Porphyrio foret, tota illius*

> application of any part of this prophecy by modern commentators to Antiochus, rests chiefly on the authority of a Platonic philosopher, who notoriously falsified historical facts to further his own calumny against Christianity, together with that of one of the Fathers of the Church, who being acknowledged to possess superior means of forming a judgment to any subsequent commentator, does not testify in favour of it, but rather to the contrary, allowing it only in a very inferior and subordinate sense.[105]

Frere was also right that Porphyry falsified historical facts, which some commentators have also noticed. Frere said that parts of Daniel 11 fit Napoleon Bonaparte better than Antiochus. But I think that Maccabean interpretations were begun, not by Porphyry or the early church fathers, but by Jews who preceded them, Jews who idealized Mattathias and his sons. This would help explain Hippolytus's early Maccabean interpretations. Yet Porphyry's specific interpretations were certainly not held by all Jews. Acts 23:8 says that the Pharisees believed in a future literal resurrection just like Christians, not a figurative resurrection like Porphyry believed in.

## The Epistle to the Hebrews Praises the Martyrs, Not the Maccabees.

The martyrs mentioned in the Books of the Maccabees, like the Christians after them, lived in fear of the future judgment of Daniel 12:2. They wanted to be judged as righteous in the final judgment and get a resurrection to everlasting life as a reward. Both groups believed that if they sinned during persecution, they would be punished in the afterlife as sinners and fail to get life everlasting. The reason that persecutors tried to make Jews violate their religion, was to make them leave their religion. The reason that persecutors tried to make Christians disown the Son of Man was the same.

---

*capitis historia hactenus alta silentii oblivione abdita, ridiculas a multis tam veteribus, quam huius saeculi scriptoribus conjecturas expressisset.* This meant: "For we owe the entire interpretation of the very obscure chapter 11 to him [Porphyry], as Jerome attests. …"

105 Pages 39-40 of *Three Letters*, etc. See Bibliography. When Frere speaks of Porphyry's comment, he seems to mean his commentary.

Even though Jesus didn't refer to the Books of the Maccabees, he would have approved of the martyrs in those books. Jesus referred to martyrdom in the face of death in Matthew 10:28-33 (ASV), saying:

> And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father: but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows. Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven.

Jesus hinted at the resurrection in the above passage. Believers would fall to the ground dead like sparrows. But God knows even the number of hairs on their heads, so He can recreate them. And Jesus intended to confess martyred believers to the Father. Their souls or lives wouldn't be destroyed.

Failure to confess the Son of Man in the face of persecution is denial. The apostle Peter set an early example of denial of the Son of Man (Luke 22:59-61):

> And after the space of about one hour another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this man also was with him; for he is a Galilaean. But Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said unto him, Before the cock crow this day thou shalt deny me thrice.

If Peter had been unrepentant, he would have been condemned in the final judgment. Matthew 13:49-50 (ASV) says that the angels would cast the wicked into the furnace of fire at the end of the world:

> So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

Wickedness is not restricted to denial of the Son of Man. For example Matt. 5:27-29 (ASV) says concerning lust:

> Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell.

If Peter died unfaithful, whether because of denial of Jesus or because of other wickedness, Jesus would deny him before the angels in the judgment. It may not be clear from the quotations above, but Jesus was referring to the judgment and resurrection in Daniel 12. Early Christians knew that whether they received a resurrection for adverse judgment or for everlasting life depended on their conduct. Religious Jews during Maccabean times were afraid to sin lest they be counted unworthy of the resurrection of the righteous (Dan. 12:1-3).

The Epistle to the Hebrews honors the martyrs that Judas Maccabaeus thought died in vain. But it doesn't honor Mattathias, Judas Maccabaeus, or the opinions of the authors of 1 and 2 Maccabees.

The 11th chapter of Hebrews cites numerous examples of faith. Many commentaries on Hebrews say that one or more of the martyrs described in 1 and 2 Macc. is alluded to in Hebrews 11. The faithful people mentioned died without receiving their promised rewards (verse 13). They died awaiting a country or city in heaven (verse 16). Verse 39 (ASV) says:

> And these all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise.

I agree with commentaries when they say that Hebrews is referring to the martyrs described in 1 and 2 Macc., but not when they say that the epistle is referring to the Hasmoneans, commonly called the Maccabees[106]. The Maccabees received their rewards on earth and don't fit in with the group mentioned in Hebrews 11.

---

106 *Encyclopaedia Biblica* says in its article called "Maccabees (Family)" (vol. 4, column 2851): "The Jews do not seem to have applied the name 'Maccabee' either to the members of the dynasty or to the books dealing with the events of their time. Instead, they used for both the adjective 'Hasmonaean' (Asmonaean …), which seems to have been the family name of the house of Mattathias."

I will list some verses in Hebrews 11 below with references to the martyrs mentioned in 1 and 2 Maccabees. For now, I will ignore remarks by commentators who claim that Hebrews referred to the Maccabean warlords. The commentators I quote from below are Samuel Lowrie[107] and Edgar Goodspeed (pages 106-107)[108]. I am only quoting two commentators out of many who have similar interpretations. I used bold type for the scripture and commentator. The bold type within quotation marks was used by the commentators:

- **Hebrews 11:35** [where the Douay says "were racked", but other translations say "were tortured":] **Lowrie: "Others were put to the rack.** Strong in the faith of a better resurrection to eternal life, they let themselves be racked instead of accepting the proffered deliverance, which would have been deliverance from temporal pain at the cost of that resurrection (2 Macc. vi. 28 sqq.)." **Goodspeed: "Women received their dead.** As in 1 Kgs. 17: 23; 2 Kgs. 4: 36, 37. **Tortured.** The reference is to 2 Macc. 6: 19, 28, where a similar word is used. **Not accepting their deliverance.** Again referring to 2 Macc. 6: 22, 30. **A better resurrection.** Probably suggested by 2 Macc. 7: 9, 14, the story of the seven martyrs and their mother. Their endurance of agony and death, in the expectation of resurrection thereafter, evinced their faith in the unseen world. **Better.** Than the restoration to earthly life mentioned earlier in the verse."
- **Hebrews 11:36: Lowrie:** "Then follows the reference to **others still** … that faith made strong to endure abuse of **mockings** (1 Macc. ix. 26; 2 Macc. vii. 7) **and scourgings** … ." **Goodspeed:** "While it is not necessary to limit the reference of these words too closely (cf. Jer. 20: 2), they are certainly appropriate to the martyrs just mentioned, in whose story mocking and scourging had a place, 2 Macc. 7: 1, 7, 10."
- **Hebrews 11:37: Goodspeed: "… Were tempted.** If this be the true reading, as the best Mss. indicate, the reference must be to the trying of men by torture, to prevail upon them to apostatize, as, *e.g.*, in the persecutions of the Maccabaean time."

---

107 Pages 441-442. An Explanation of the Epistle to the Hebrews, by the Rev. Samuel T. Lowrie (New York, 1884).

108 The Epistle to the Hebrews by Edgar J. Goodspeed, part of The Bible for Home and School (New York, 1908).

Jewish sources have also preserved stories about the persecution of martyrs during Maccabean times. A long article called "MACCABEES, THE SECOND BOOK OF"[109] says:

> 5. *Canonicity*. — Though portions of this book are incorporated in the Jewish writings, and form a part of the Ritual, viz., the martyrdom of the seven brothers and their mother (ch. vi. 1-42), which is not only mentioned in the Talmud (*Gittin*, 57, b), the Midrash of the ten commandments (ed. Jellinek; *Beth Ha-Midrash*, i, 70, etc.); Midrash Jalkut (*On Deut.,* section … 301, b), etc., but is interwoven in the service for the Feast of Dedication (comp. *The Jozer* …); the martyrdom of Eleazar (ch. vi, 18-31) also embodied in the same service, and described by Josippon, who also speaks of the wonderful appearance of the horsemen, and other circumstances narrated in 2 Macc. (compare *Josippon*, lib. ii, c. ii-iv, ed. Breithaupt, p. 172, ff.) — yet the book was never part of the Jewish canon.

Here is an interpretation I disagree with. Webster and Wilkinson say in their long footnote on the Greek text of Hebrews 11:32-38 (pages 680-681):

> Reference is then made to the victories of the Maccabees, and the persecutions under Antiochus Epiphanes … . Applicable to Jonathan (1 Sam. 14), and many O.T. worthies, but most probably to the victories of the Maccabees.

But I don't agree with them that the phrase *παρεμβολας εκλιναν αλλοτριων* in Heb. 11:34[110] probably refers "to the victories of the Maccabees". Judas Maccabaeus prayed to God to give him a victory over a very numerous multitude in 1 Macc. 4:30-33. Judas specifically mentioned in his prayer how God gave the host of strangers into the hands of Jonathan the son of Saul, and his armor-bearer. Judas was referring to 1 Samuel 14. Jonathan told his armor-bearer:

> … for there is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few (1 Sam. 14:6 ASV).

---

109 A Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature, by John Kitto and William Lindsay Alexander, 3rd edition (Edinburgh, 1876).

110 ASV: "… turned to flight armies of aliens." Douay: "… put to flight the armies of foreigners:"

Jonathan's victory was a famous Biblical type of a miraculous salvation by a small army. Judas wanted God to bless him with a victory against great odds in the same manner. Even if we believe that God did cause Judas's victory, that doesn't make Judas Maccabaeus the new Biblical type, replacing Jonathan. Judas would have been only one of many antitypes, but Jonathan would remain the type. Judas eventually lost faith in the lesson of 1 Sam. 14:6 and turned to the Romans for help. He no longer believed that the Lord would "save by few". The Romans soon controlled Judea and finally destroyed it. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews would not have used anything Judas Maccabaeus did as an example for Christians to follow. Webster and Wilkinson should have omitted their references to the victories of the Maccabees, by which they mean Mattathias and his warlord sons.

Webster and Wilkinson continue in their very long footnote on their Greek text of Hebrews 11:32-38 (page 681):

> *ετυμπανισθησαν*] Reference is made to Eleazar, 2 Macc. 6:19, on his being compelled to eat swine's flesh … .

Numerous commentators agree, and I think they are right. Eleazar was racked or tortured after saying[111]:

> For though, for the present time, I should be delivered from the punishments of men, yet should I not escape the hand of the Almighty neither alive nor dead.

It sounds like Eleazar knew about the resurrection of judgment described in Daniel 12:1-2. Eleazar sounds like the kind of example that would have impressed the author of Hebrews, since he, like Abraham,

> … died according to faith, not having received the promises, but beholding them afar off, and saluting them, and confessing, that they are pilgrims and strangers on the earth[112].

But Eleazar would not have impressed the sons of Mattathias, who thought that the martyrs who died in the wilderness[113] without fighting back and profaning the Sabbath had died in vain. The martyrs said (1 Macc. 2:37 Douay):

---

111 2 Macc. 6:26 Douay

112 Heb. 11:13 Douay

113 1 Macc. 2:29-38.

> Let us die all in our innocency: and heaven and earth shall be witnesses for us, that you put us to death wrongfully.

They expected a resurrection if they died righteous. But that kind of faith made no sense to Mattathias and his friends who said (1 Macc. 2:40-41):

> And every man said to his neighbour: If we shall all do as our brethren have done, and not fight against the heathens for our lives, and our justifications: they will now quickly root us out of the earth. And they determined in that day, saying: Whosoever shall come up against us to fight on the sabbath-day, we will fight against him: and we will not all die, as our brethren that were slain in the secret places.

Mattathias and his friends were seeking glory, not resurrection. So Mattathias said:

> You therefore, my sons, take courage, and behave manfully in the law: for by it you shall be glorious.[114] (1 Macc. 2:64)

I previously quoted brief references to the "better resurrection" of Heb. 11:35. Webster and Wilkinson say in their long footnote on their Greek text of Hebrews 11:32-38 (page 681):

> This may refer to the suffering inflicted by Antiochus on seven brethren, with their mother, as is related in 2 Macc. 7:1−42, where *κρειττονος αναστ.* may be illustrated by 7:9 … .

They quote the Greek text of 2 Macc. 7:9 to show how it might have inspired the words *κρειττονος αναστασεως* (meaning "a better resurrection") in Heb. 11:35[115]. They explain the phrase with this note:

> … 'a better' than that spoken of in the first clause; better than restoration to life in this world.

---

114 The Maccabees did achieve glory, as the Books of the Maccabees make clear. Jews glorify them to this day with the holiday called Hanukkah. Books were written about them. Their tombs exist somewhere in the Holy Land. But those weren't the goals that the martyrs of Hebrews 11 were seeking.

115 ASV: “… that they might obtain a better resurrection:” Douay: "… that they might find a better resurrection."

Other commentators agree with them that Heb. 11:35 alludes to 2 Macc. 7, because the martyrdom of the mother and her seven sons fit in with the theme of Hebrews 11. Unlike Judas Maccabaeus, they didn't get their reward on earth. They had faith and awaited a heavenly reward after a resurrection, in agreement with the teachings of the Book of Daniel. The mother's faith in the resurrection is shown in 2 Macc. 7:23:

> But the Creator of the world, that formed the nativity of man, and that found out the origin of all, he will restore to you again in his mercy, both breath and life, as now you despise yourselves for the sake of his laws.

At the end of the same very long footnote on page 681, Webster and Wilkinson refer *πλανωμενοι και ορεσι και σπηλαιοις* in verse 38[116] to

> David, the prophets mentioned by Obadiah, Elijah, and others, 1 Sam. 22:1. 23:14. 24:3. 1 K. 18:4, 13. 19:9. 2 Macc. 6:11.

So the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews might have been thinking of the righteous martyrs described in 2 Macc. 6:11 when he wrote that verse. Or maybe he was thinking of other righteous men like the prophets that Obadiah hid in a cave. Maybe he was thinking of Elijah, who hid in a cave after being threatened by Jezebel's messengers. Passages such as 2 Macc. 5:27 and 1 Macc. 2:28-29 which place Mattathias, his sons, and his followers in the wilderness and the mountains are not enough to prove that the author of Hebrews referred to them in Heb. 11:38. Elijah and Obadiah would never have made entanglements with pagan nations to save themselves, as Judas did with the Romans. Instead of fighting to avoid martyrdom and gain glory, they hid. So the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews wouldn't have used Judas and his warriors as good examples[117].

---

116 The Greek phrase is part of this phrase in Heb. 11:38 ASV: "… wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth." Both the Hasmoneans and the martyrs wandered in deserts, mountains, and caves. But the author of Hebrews is talking about people who died without a reward. He is not promising the promise (vs. 39), "a better country, that is, a heavenly", to people like the Hasmonean warriors who sinned, achieved glory in this world, and who fought to avoid martyrdom. The idolater warriors in 2 Macc. 12:39-45 don't qualify for a resurrection to everlasting life.

117 Not all commentators assume that Hebrews 11 refers to the Hasmoneans. 1 Macc. 2:29 says that others besides the Hasmoneans (who were mentioned in verse 28) also fled to the wilderness. 2 Macc. 6:11 refers to the righteous Jews who fled to caves and endured martyrdom (unlike the unrighteous Hasmoneans).

Jesus expected his followers to risk death for simply imitating him and also confessing him even in the face of death. Just as Jesus didn't fight, so also he never suggested that his followers fight back, in contrast to Judas Maccabaeus. Jesus said[118]:

> The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up. And he said unto all, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit his own self?

Jesus never mentioned Judas Maccabaeus or the other Hasmoneans, probably because he rejected their behavior. Jesus never authorized his followers to use violence. Matthew 26:52 quotes Jesus saying to Peter:

> … Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Unlike the Maccabean warriors, Jesus and his followers never gave up their belief in the resurrection.

In summary, the only thing that is approved by the Christian Scriptures in 1 and 2 Maccabees is the examples of martyrs who suffered death rather than sin, following examples in the Book of Daniel. And they made that sacrifice to be worthy of the resurrection promised in Daniel 12.

The Maccabean warriors thought that the deaths of the passive martyrs were in vain. In contrast, the Epistle to the Hebrews exhorted Christians to follow the example of the martyrs and was silent about the Maccabean warriors.

It is surprising that the Epistle to the Hebrews would refer to a book as corrupt as 2 Maccabees. But the references in Hebrews might have actually come from Jason of Cyrene (2 Macc. 2:24 Douay) or from other Jewish sources. Many reference works say that the stories of the Maccabean martyrs are embellished, not history. That may

---

118 Luke 9:22-26 ASV. Jesus thought he was destined to be killed by the gentiles and he expected his followers to also accept martyrdom without fighting back. He must have had the same interpretation of the examples given in Daniel chapters 3 and 6 as the Maccabean martyrs had.

be true. The Epistle to the Hebrews only makes brief references to those martyrdoms, and we can't be sure that the author of Hebrews accepted the stories exactly as told in 2 Maccabees.

## Mattathias and His Sons Were Worldly and Made Forbidden Alliances.

I mentioned in previous chapters that both anti-Christian and Christian authors think that the Book of Daniel is about the times of Antiochus Epiphanes and Judas Maccabaeus to some degree. A purpose of this chapter is to show that the Hasmoneans, or Maccabees, weren't Biblical heroes. In fact they didn't have much faith in God.

1 and 2 Maccabees show that Mattathias and his family knew passages from the Book of Daniel. But they don't seem to have taken the resurrection mentioned in Daniel 12:1-3 literally. They rejected martyrdom. The martyrs thought that they should die rather than sin, following the examples of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They thought that they would be miraculously raised from the dead to everlasting life as a reward. But the Hasmoneans had a different interpretation of Daniel 12, possibly one similar to Porphyry's, and possibly thinking that “shining as the brightness of the firmament” in Daniel 12:3 referred to glory achieved by heroism in war.

Mattathias told his sons in his deathbed speech that they should be valiant and show themselves men in behalf of the Law, to become "glorious" (1 Macc. 2:64). Mattathias began his speech by saying:

> Now therefore, O my sons, be ye zealous for the law, and give your lives for the covenant of your fathers. And call to remembrance the works of the fathers, which they have done in their generations: and you shall receive **great glory, and an everlasting name**. (1 Macc. 2:50-51 Douay)

The Books of the Maccabees praise glory in the Greek and Hellenistic manner. Mattathias didn't say: “Be righteous according to the Law.” He was talking about fighting to the death on behalf of the Law to achieve great honor and everlasting fame, the goals that the Greek warlords pursued. A certain Eleazar, the son of Saura,[119] died

119 Not Eleazar the martyr. See 1 Macc. 6:43-45.

in battle when he killed an elephant. He "exposed himself to deliver his people, and **to get himself an everlasting name**." We know his name over 2,000 years later because it was written in a literary monument, that is, in 1 Maccabees. When Mattathias mentioned ancient worthies like Abraham, Joseph, Caleb, Joshua (Jesus in the Douay), Elijah (Elias in the Douay), and Daniel in 1 Macc. 2, he didn't say they would be resurrected. What was important to the author of 1 Maccabees was that their names be remembered everlastingly in the Bible. The warlord sons of Mattathias did achieve glory, since their names and deeds are preserved in the Books of the Maccabees. Jews glorify them to this day with the holiday called Hanukkah.

Deut. 28, verses 1 and 7 (Douay), had promised:

> Now if thou wilt hear the voice of the Lord thy God, to do and keep all his commandments, which I command thee this day, the Lord thy God will make thee higher than all the nations that are on the earth. … **The Lord shall cause thy enemies, that rise up against thee, to fall down before thy face: one way shall they come out against thee, and seven ways shall they flee before thee.**

The Hebrew Scriptures reveal occasions when that promise was fulfilled. But few if any such times existed after the Babylonian captivity. The Maccabees won their victories by themselves without supernatural help, like the State of Israel today. If we read in history about a gentile warlord who put an enemy to flight, we can't assume that God intervened. Sometimes people who don't obey the God of the Bible defeat enemies because of their skill, or because of favorable circumstances. If Judas had defeated Antiochus in a supernatural manner similar to the destruction of Sennacherib's army, Hanukkah would really commemorate a great event and be an honor to the Jews. But the Maccabees were sinful people who won imperfect victories without God's help, and the events commemorated by Hanukkah are simply the best substitute that Jews have had for an actual deliverance by God since centuries before the times of Mattathias.

God's help was not enough. So in 1 Macc. 8:17-20 Judas makes a league of amity and protection with the Romans. Jonathan, the son of Mattathias, was such a friend of the uncircumcised Romans that 1 Macc. 14:16 says:

> And it was heard at Rome, and as far as Sparta, that Jonathan was dead: and they were very sorry.

Simon, another son of Mattathias, "sent Numenius to Rome, with a great shield of gold … to confirm the league with them"[120]. The Jews and priests, without Scriptural authority, made Simon governor and high priest for ever, "till there should arise a faithful prophet"[121]. 1 Macc. 14:35 Douay says:

> And the people seeing the acts of Simon, **and to what glory he meant to bring his nation**, made him their prince, and high priest, because he had done all these things, and for the justice, and faith, which he kept to his nation, and for that he sought by all means to advance his people.

Simon sent ambassadors to Rome and gave the Romans a valuable gift, whereupon Lucius, consul of the Romans, wrote to several kings to hand over Jews who opposed Simon (1 Macc. 15:16-24). Simon enriched himself. The writer of 1 Macc. called the riches glory[122]:

> So Athenobius the king's friend came to Jerusalem, and saw the glory of Simon and his magnificence in gold, and silver, and his great equipage, and he was astonished, and told him the king's words.

Mattathias, Judas, Jonathan, and Simon got their reward in this world, not the next.

Others have objected to the lack of spirituality of Judas Maccabaeus[123]. Morris J. Raphall, an admirer of Judas, wrote[124]:

---

120 1 Macc. 14:24

121 1 Macc. 14:41-47. The Jews decided that Simon "… should be clothed with purple, and gold. And that it should not be lawful" for any other Jew to "be clothed with purple, or to wear a buckle of gold … ." Gold, power, and glory were the goals of the uncircumcised gentile warlords, but not of the Christians or of the martyrs of Mattathias's time.

122 1 Macc. 15:32 Douay. Translated "glory" in the book, The Apocrypha: Greek and English, in Parallel Columns (London, 1871). Also, *gloriam* in the Vulgate.

123 Raphall, p. 325.

124 From Post-Biblical History of the Jews, etc., by Morris J. Raphall, Rabbi Preacher at the Synagogue. Volume 1 of 2 (Philadelphia, 1856). Raphall admired Judas Maccabaeus and said that the Assidaeans had an excess of zeal (page 326). The Midrash Hhanuka is part of Bet ha-Midrasch, published by Adolph Jellinek, (Leipzig, 1853). The text is in Hebrew, but the title of this section is in German, "Midraschim fur Chanuka". Heinrich Graetz told part of the same story that I quoted from Raphall in Geschichte der Juden von den altesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart (Leipzig, 1856). An English translation of this

> Those among the Jews who had been foremost to support the Maccabees and to fight the battles of the Lord, the Hassidim, were no longer attached to that chief as they had been. He entertained friendly relations with the Parthians, who were also at war with the Syrians; and he had, moreover, by way of response to the advances made by the Romans, sent an embassy to Rome to conclude an alliance with that mighty commonwealth. Both these measures were loudly condemned by the Hassidim as impious, and implying a doubt of the power of God to help his people. The Midrash Hhanuka preserves the very words in which the leader of the Hassidim expressed his dissatisfaction to the Maccabees: “Then Jochanan became wroth, and said to the Asmonean, Is it not written, 'Cursed be the man who placeth his dependence on the flesh, while from the Lord his heart departeth; but blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, for the Lord will be his trust.' (Jer. xvii. 5, 6.) Thou and thine, I and mine, we represent the twelve tribes of Jah, (the Lord;) and through us, I am assured, the Lord would have wrought wondrously."

I mentioned in a footnote that Arthur Penrhyn Stanley objected to the Midrash Hhanuka and also to the references to the story by Raphall (1856) and by Graetz (1856). Graetz appears to have paraphrased this story from the Midrash Hhanuka, not translated it. I don't know German, but a footnote in the German edition seems to mean that Graetz only actually quoted one line from the Midrash Hhanuka, based on

---

volume was made later (History of the Jews, Vol. I, From the Earliest Period to the Death of Simon the Maccabee; Philadelphia, 1891). Arthur Penrhyn Stanley said in a footnote in Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church, Third Series (London, 1876) that Raphall copied this story from Graetz, volume 3, page 10 without verifying it. Stanley seems to have been referring to the 1863 edition (volume 3) of Graetz's history, where the story is found on page 10. Stanley attributed some lines to Graetz that are very similar to some of the lines that I quoted from Raphall. But I don't think that Graetz ever wrote those words. After laboriously studying the German original with online translational tools, and after reading the story in the 1891 English translation of Graetz's history, I think that Raphall made an independent translation. He didn't copy from Graetz. Since I couldn't find the lines in Graetz that Stanley said were there, I won't comment on the other interesting things that Stanley said in his footnote.

Jeremiah 17:5-7, which quotation I will underline below as it reads in the 1891 English edition[125]:

> They were not content with mere religious freedom; they wished to establish political independence. But the Hasmonaeans feared that they lacked the strength to effect this purpose. They therefore determined to rely upon extraneous aid, and for this purpose they desired to connect themselves with the Roman government and, it appears, also with the Parthians, who had freed themselves from Syrian rule. But it was this worldly policy that incensed the Assidaeans. They put their trust in God alone, and could imagine warfare possible only if conducted according to Biblical precedent; they believed that God would confound the enemy in a miraculous way, and, in their opinion, to seek foreign help was to cast a doubt upon the omnipotence of God. "It is better to trust in the Lord than to confide in man," they quoted, "it is better to trust in the Lord than to confide in princes." This discontent, it may be surmised, was the cause of the separation of the Assidaeans from the Hasmonaeans, thereby reducing the number of the Maccabaean warriors. This circumstance may have brought about the death of Judas.

Raphall defended Judas's entanglement with the Romans on page 322:

> The concluding of this treaty with Rome has exposed Judah[126] to blame from two very different sets of reasoners. One party blames him for that, being manifestly protected by God, he should still have sought human aid. But then the word of God nowhere commands that pious men are never to listen to the wholesome counsels of earthly wisdom, nor does it condemn the adopting of measures of human prudence as incompatible with a perfect trust in the Lord.

Raphall didn't back up his statement with scriptures. The Hassidim, or Assidaeans, who confronted Judas are dead and can't speak for themselves. So I will speak on their behalf below:

---

125 History of the Jews, by Professor H. Graetz Vol. I From the Earliest Period to the Death of Simon the Maccabee (135 B.C.E.) (Philadelphia, 1891).

126 Judas Maccabaeus is Anglicized different ways. Raphall calls him Judah the Maccabee.

> Deut. 28:1-7 says that Israel's enemies would be defeated if Israel hearkened to Jehovah's commands. Deut. 28:15-25 says, on the other hand, that Israel would be defeated by their enemies if they failed to hearken to God's commands. Nothing is stated about seeking foreign alliances in Deut. chapters 28 through 30. But Deut. 28:48-57 says that if the Israelites didn't hearken to God's commands, God would bring a fierce nation from the end of the earth, which spoke a foreign language, and which would abuse the people and devastate the land. This is what the Romans eventually did to Judea. The Bible told the Israelites not to make covenants with non-Israelites (Exodus 23:31-33, Ex. 34:12-15, Deut. 7:2, and Judges 2:2.) Deut. 20:1 says: "When thou goest forth to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, *and* a people more than thou, thou shalt not be afraid of them; for Jehovah thy God is with thee, who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Isaiah 31:1 says: "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, and trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek Jehovah!" Verse 8 shows that verse 1 pertains to fear of the Assyrians. Later, 185,000 Assyrians were killed by an angel of Jehovah (Isaiah 37:36). So Egyptian help, although tempting, was not necessary.

God didn't provide Judas with his victories. In 1 Macc. 7:40-42, Judas was still relying on Jehovah instead of the Romans, and asked for the protection of an angel, like the one who killed 185,000 Assyrians. Verses 47-48 say that Judas got a great victory. But angelic intervention is not recorded. Verse 50 says that Judah was at rest only a little while. Apparently God's help was a disappointment to Judas, because he made an alliance with Rome in the next chapter, 1 Macc. 8. Jonathan his brother also turned to the Romans (1 Macc. 12:1 Douay):

> And Jonathan saw that the time served him, and he chose certain men and sent them to Rome, to confirm and to renew the amity with them:

Jonathan should have prayed to the God of Israel for protection.

If the Midrash Hanukkah was wrong, and if there was never any confrontation between the Assidaeans and the so-called Maccabees like the one described by Raphall, it was because all the faithful Jews who relied on God's power were dead already. But I doubt that. Josephus tells of many Jews who risked martyrdom for their religion much later, about the time of Jesus. I mention them elsewhere in this book.

## Some Have Said That the Son of Man of Daniel 7:13 Was Judas Maccabaeus.

Nathaniel Lardner translated a famous passage from Jerome's commentary on Daniel as follows:

> 'Let Porphyry answer, to whom of men this can agree: or, who is so powerful, as to break in pieces, and trample upon the little horn, which he takes to be Antiochus? If he answers, that the generals of Antiochus were overcome by Judas Maccabaeus, he ought to shew, “how he came with the clouds of heaven as the son of man: and how he was brought before the Ancient of days: and power, and a kingdom was given unto him: so that all people, and nations, and languages, should serve him:” and his kingdom should be everlasting, and without end[127].'

The above passage has often been interpreted to mean that Porphyry interpreted the Son of Man who ascended to the clouds of heaven in Daniel 7 as Judas Maccabaeus. Moses Stuart understood the passage that way. He discussed different interpretations of the expression "son of man", saying:

> Porphyry applied it to Judas Maccabaeus; upon which Jerome asks, how Judas came with the clouds, and whether his kingdom was perpetual.[128]

Paul Haupt wrote in an article called "The Son of Man" in 1919[129]:

---

127 Lardner, page 217 of Vol. 4 (1815). But notice that Jerome was speaking rhetorically, in a jussive third-person exhortation: "Let Porphyry answer, etc.". Porphyry was dead. Nobody could really ask him a question with hope of an answer. Porphyry's books still existed when Jerome wrote. Why didn't Jerome explicitly say what Porphyry thought? Why did Jerome write: “If he answers …?” Maybe Porphyry didn't identify the Son of Man.

128 Page 216. A Commentary On the Book of Daniel, by Moses Stuart (Boston, 1850).

129 Page 130. "The Son of Man", an article by Paul Haupt in *The Monist,* edited by Paul Carus, Volume 29 (Chicago, 1919). Digitized by Google.

> The man whom Daniel in his vision saw ascending to heaven on a cloud does not represent the ideal and glorified people of Judea or Michael, the guardian angel of the Jews, but the savior of Judea, Judas Maccabaeus.

Very few commentators believe that the Son of Man of Daniel 7 is Judas. It turns out that a lot of the “true historie” that Porphyry thought he proved to be written in Daniel is rejected or questioned by modern commentators[130].

Julius H. Greenstone wrote[131]:

> Some writers would conclude that the hope for a personal Messiah had died out in the minds of the people, because there is no reference in contemporary literature to the belief that Judah Maccabee, the redeemer of his people, the beloved general of his army, and the adored hero of his nation, was the long-expected Messiah, — a belief most natural in the circumstances. … The Messianic ideal was so firmly rooted and so clearly defined, and its association with the personal Messiah, the king of the house of David, so obvious, that the people would regard no one as the Messiah except a scion of the Davidic dynasty. Since Judah was a priest, he could not be the Messiah. God had assisted him and given him great strength, because he would not permit the destruction of His people, but this temporary relief was not the prayed-for redemption at the end of days.

Greenstone also wrote that the apocalyptic literature of the times proves that the Messianic idea was alive during Maccabean times. Even though Greenstone thought that Judas couldn't be the Messiah because he didn't descend from King David, I suspect that many Jews who lived at his time considered him to be an archetype or forerunner of the Messiah. Jews have honored him with the Feast of Lights for over 2000 years. That annual celebration was made for one of Judas's exploits. And I suspect that when Jesus warned his disciples not to listen to people who said "Behold he is in the desert: go ye not out" (Matt. 24:26 Douay), the disciples were reminded of Judas more than of anybody else. That is, Jesus was warning about a false earthly messiah conducting guerilla warfare in the same manner as Judas Maccabaeus.

---

130 Some commentaries, both liberal and conservative, have accused Porphyry of falsifying history. I will mention some later.

131 Pages 64-65. The Messiah Idea in Jewish History, by Julius H. Greenstone. (Philadelphia, 1906).

## The Desolation of the Temple by Antiochus Wasn't Prophesied.

Most commentators on the Book of Daniel say that it referred to the desolation of the temple at the time of Antiochus, and that the time of the desolation was foretold in Daniel. All of this is easy to prove false.

1 Maccabees says that the time period of the desolation of the temple was three years to the day. 2 Maccabees says that it was 2 years to the day. Judas and his followers probably did think that Divine Intervention caused this coincidence: the cleansing of the temple did happen on the same month and day as the defilement, Chislev 25.

But no reference to a prophecy in Daniel exists in either 1 or 2 Maccabees. And there is no time period of exactly 2 or 3 years in Daniel. Josephus later summarized the events in 1 Macc. and added his interpretation that it was a fulfillment of a prophecy in Daniel.

Christian commentators have often followed Josephus in their explanations of Daniel's time prophecies[132]. But Jerome protested that 3½ years does not equal 3 years. Nathaniel Lardner provides a translation of Jerome's commentary on Daniel 12:21, saying:

> 'These thousand two hundred and ninety days, Porphyry says, were fulfilled in the time of Antiochus, and in the desolation of the temple: whereas Josephus and the book of Maccabees, as before said, mention three years only[133]. Whence it is manifest, that the three years and a half are to be

---

132 Ephraem the Syrian (my translation from the Benedictus Latin text, on Daniel 7:25-26): “And they will be handed over into his hand for a time and times and half of a time, that is, for three years and six months. And judgment will sit. Doubtless, to avenge the injuries to the Holy Ones, namely, [injuries to] the Just Ones observing the law of the Most High, and to punish and to break to pieces the small horn, Antiochus, by whom the zealous ones of the house of Jacob had been harassed and afflicted.” So Ephraem placed the fulfillment of the 3½ times in the times of Antiochus, that is, in the times of the Maccabees, or Hasmoneans.

133 Actually 2 Macc. 10:2-3 says two years, not three. So 2 Macc. contradicts the three-year period calculated from 1 Macc. 1:54 (1:57 Douay) and 1 Macc. 4:52. And it also contradicts all the commentaries on Daniel.

understood of the times of Antichrist, who will persecute the saints for three years and half, that is, a thousand two hundred and ninety days.'[134]

Nathaniel Lardner provides this translation from Jerome's commentary on Daniel[135] 12:12:

'Porphyry says, that the five and forty days over and above the one thousand two hundred and ninety, shew the time of the victory gained over the generals of Antiochus; when Judas the Maccabee fought valiantly, and cleansed the temple, broke the idol in pieces, and offered sacrifices in the temple; which might be rightly said, if the book of Maccabees had related that the temple was polluted three years and a half, and not three years[136].'

Instead of making up excuses to explain why the numbers in 1 and 2 Macc. don't harmonize with Daniel, it is better to pay attention to what the authors of 1 and 2 Macc. actually said. They wanted the dedication of the temple to be kept as a holiday, but didn't say that the date, the 25th of Casleu (Chislev), or the dedication itself was predicted in Daniel. That explains how 1 and 2 Macc. could disagree about the number of years the temple was defiled. The number of years was not important to them at all, and they weren't trying to explain Daniel.

1 Macc. 4:59 says:

And Judas, and his brethren, and all the church of Israel decreed, that the day of the dedication of the altar should be kept in its season from year to year for eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month of Casleu, with joy and gladness.

2 Macc. 10:5 says:

---

134 Page 222 of Vol. 4 (1815).

135 Page 222.

136 Page 222 of Vol. 4 (1815). Lardner didn't agree with Jerome. Instead he cites Prideaux, who harmonized the numbers. Lardner wrote: "According to different computations of the beginning and ending of the troubles of the Jewish people, the numbers may vary a little without any detriment to the true history." I think that Lardner, Prideaux, and Porphyry were clutching at straws to prove preconceived notions. Everybody should forget the Books of the Maccabees when explaining the Book of Daniel. Besides Jerome, very few commentators have acknowledged the obvious fact that the time periods in 1 and 2 Macc. simply don't match Daniel.

> Now upon the same day that the temple had been polluted by the strangers, on the very same day it was cleansed again, to wit, on the five and twentieth day of the month of Casleu.

2 Macc. 10:8:

> And they ordained by a common statute, and decree, that all the nation of the Jews should keep those days every year.

There was a campaign to regularly celebrate this new festival, which was called "scenopegia" in Latin. No prophecy was needed to obtain what they wanted. 2 Macc. 1:9, translated from Latin, exhorts the Egyptian Jews:

> And now celebrate ye the days of Scenopegia in the month of Casleu.

The writers of 1 and 2 Macc. got what they wanted, because the Festival of Dedication (Hanukkah, or the Festival of Lights) was celebrated till the destruction of the temple, and is a festival to this day. Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible says that the Feast of Dedication:[137]

> was instituted by Judas Maccabaeus (B.C. 164) in commemoration of the purification of the temple and altar after they had been polluted by Antiochus Epiphanes (1 Mac 4[59]). It was to be 'kept from year to year by the space of eight days from the five and twentieth day of the month Chislev' (about the time of the winter solstice). … This illumination was so prominent a feature in the Feast of the Ded. that it was sometimes called the Feast of Lights (Jos. *Ant*. XII. vii. 7). Josephus, however, does not mention the illumination in private houses, which has been a marked feature of the feast from the end of the 1st cent. to the present time.

If the authors of 1 and 2 Macc. believed that the 3-year period fulfilled one of the time periods of Daniel, why didn't they say so? Why did they only mention the coincidence that the temple was defiled on the same day and month as the dedication of the altar, that is, on the 25th of Casleu? The answer is, to borrow language from Josephus, they could not but wonder at the accuracy of the period which fate had decreed (Josephus *Wars* 6.4.8[138]). We ourselves can not but wonder at coincidences

137 Page 585. Under the entry, "DEDICATION, THE FEAST OF THE". Vol. I. (New York, 1902).

138 Josephus was awestruck at the coincidence that the Second Temple was burned “in the

that happen to us, but we don't assume that our lives were predicted by Daniel the prophet every time we are astonished by a coincidence. To the eyes of faith the Chislev 25th coincidence was directed by God, not merely caused by Judas's delaying the cleansing and rebuilding of the temple to make the dates match. Divine Intervention could only be seen in the victories of Mattathias and Judas by eyes of faith. There weren't any undeniable miracles, even though Judas hoped for them repeatedly. A victory in battle isn't a miracle. The expected outcome for all battles is that one side wins and the other side loses.

Unlike commentators on Daniel, Jesus never tried to explain the time periods of Daniel. He said: "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority" (Acts 1:7).

## The Thinking of 1 Maccabees.

1 Maccabees supports the dynasty of the Hasmoneans enthusiastically, as if the writer himself was descended from Mattathias. It supports the Feast of Dedication and another celebration to commemorate Judas's victory over Nicanor. The book supports the goal of achieving an everlasting glorious remembrance in this life, not the goal of becoming worthy of everlasting life. Mattathias and Judas don't seem to believe in a resurrection in 1 Maccabees. It's possible that Mattathias didn't reject Daniel 12:2. He might have interpreted it figuratively, as did Porphyry, Ephraem the Syrian, and Luis de Alcazar. 1 Maccabees presents the martyrdom of the Maccabean martyrs as a misguided mistake.

This book doesn't actually explicitly say that the defilement of the altar and the desolation of the temple caused by Antiochus was a fulfillment of prophecies in Daniel, but it seems to hint at it by using certain expressions from Daniel such as "abomination of desolation", by speaking of the desolation of the temple, and by using

---

fourth month, the ninth day of the month”, just like Solomon's Temple (Jer. 39:2.) So he wrote: "However, one cannot but wonder at the accuracy of this period thereto relating; for the same month and day were now observed, as I said before, wherein the holy house was burnt formerly by the Babylonians." There was no prophecy that the two temples would be burned on the same calendar date. But Josephus thought it was too unlikely to be a mere coincidence.

the word "Kittim". The mention of Alexander the Great and some details about him in chapter 1 seem to refer to a fulfillment of Daniel to those who are predisposed to believe so, but not to an unbiased reader. In "An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament", S.R. Driver inserted a chronological table of Antiochus's reign in Chapter 11. He added to the table suggestions that certain passages in the Books of the Maccabees and of Daniel are related. Driver's comment on 176 B.C. is:

> Accession of Antiochus to the throne of Syria (1 Macc. $1^{10}$); Dan. [$7^{8.11.\ 20}$] $8^{9.23}$; $11^{21}$.

Driver referred to 1 Macc. 1:10 KJV. I don't quote the King James Version, since it is not public-domain in all countries. I will quote the Douay, where it is numbered as verse 11, and which says:

> And there came out of them a wicked root, Antiochus the Illustrious, the son of king Antiochus, who had been a hostage at Rome: and he reigned in the hundred and thirty-seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks.

Daniel 11:21 Douay says:

> And there shall stand up in his place one despised, and the kingly honour shall not be given him: and he shall come privately, and shall obtain the kingdom by fraud.

Driver said that the writer of 1 Macc. was referring to Dan. 8:9 and 23, and also 11:21, and possibly also to Daniel 7:8, 11, and 20. Driver thought that those verses in Daniel were clearly about Antiochus's accession to the throne in 176 B.C. But I don't think that much in Daniel 11 clearly means anything. James Hatley Frere thought that Daniel 11:21 was clearly about Napoleon[139], not about Antiochus. I am now simply examining passages where this book supposedly refers to the Book of Daniel, not asserting what the meaning of Daniel originally was.

Driver's comment on 170 B.C. in the 1910 edition is:

> *First* expedition of Antiochus against Egypt (1 Macc. $1^{16\text{-}19}$), Dan. $11^{25\text{-}27}$ (v. $^{22\text{-}24}$ are probably a *general* description of Antiochus' policy). Antiochus on his return from Egypt enters the Temple, carries off the sacred vessels, and massacres many Jews (1 Macc. $1^{20\text{-}28}$), Dan. $8^{9b\text{-}10}$; $11^{28}$.

139 "Three Letters". Frere mentions this prophecy twice. There was more than one edition. The pagination varies. See bibliography.

These opinions are common. If you believe Driver, you will not believe Luke. Each reader can decide whether Driver is right that 1 Macc. is alluding to Daniel, and secondly, whether Daniel 11:25-27 is about Antiochus's expedition against Egypt. J.H. Frere thought that Dan. 11:22 in the KJV, mentioned also by Driver, was clearly about the flood of Napoleon's armies from the summit of the Apennines to destroy two armies and also to inundate the plains of Lombardy[140]. 1 Macc. 1:16-19 KJV, referred to by Driver, corresponds to verses 17-20 in the Douay, which verses say:

> And the kingdom was established before Antiochus, and he had a mind to reign over the land of Egypt, that he might reign over two kingdoms. And he entered into Egypt with a great multitude, with chariots and elephants, and horsemen, and a great number of ships: And he made war against Ptolemee king of Egypt, but Ptolemee was afraid at his presence, and fled, and many were wounded unto death. And he took the strong cities in the land of Egypt: and he took the spoils of the land of Egypt.

Daniel 11:25 Douay says:

> And his strength and his heart shall be stirred up against the king of the south with a great army: and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with many and very strong succours: and they shall not stand, for they shall form designs against him.

So Driver is saying that the verses in 1 Macc. correspond to the verses of Daniel that he cited. I don't think that the book is clearly alluding to Daniel, and I don't think that the verses in Daniel that Driver cited above are clear.

Driver wrote concerning the year 167 B.C.:

> Revolt against the persecuting measures of Antiochus, organized by Mattathias and his five sons (the Maccabees), (1 Macc. 2), Dan. 11[34] (the "little help").

Driver's interpretations are common. But I say in my book that neither Luke nor Jesus cared about 1 Maccabees, so no Christian should. And I say in this book that Luke interpreted Daniel in a manner unlike any other commentator. I also say that since Jesus ignored the 11th chapter of Daniel, we should too.

---

140 "Three Letters", pages 20 and 44.

Here is my guess why the author of 1 Maccabees seems to just hint at Daniel sometimes, whereas he was unmistakably clear when he referred to the stories of the fiery furnace and the story of Daniel in the lions' den: He knew that many readers at his time would consider the interpretations that we call Maccabean to be preposterous. But the author of 1 Macc. might have thought he could safely adorn his book with terminology from the Book of Daniel as long as he only hinted and was not specific. That way he could deny that he was interpreting the Book of Daniel to anybody who objected. His goal was not to explain the Book of Daniel but to glorify Judas Maccabaeus as savior of Judah and to encourage the celebration of two holidays to honor Judas. On the other hand, his hints or allusions to Daniel may be imaginary, only existing in the minds of some readers. When the writer of 1 Maccabees wanted to make a clear scriptural reference, he knew how to do it. I will mention some examples a little further below.

I objected in a previous chapter that it does not make any scriptural sense for a pagan sacrifice or idol which was put on the altar in the temple by a pagan warlord to be called an abomination of desolation. Manasseh's idolatry fit Deuteronomy 28-30, but Antiochus's idolatry didn't. Many early readers of 1 Maccabees 1:57 (as the verse is numbered in the Douay) surely recognized that. Luke said that the abomination of desolation was an army that would tread Jerusalem, not an idol. That made scriptural sense to some ancient Jews who understood the fourth beast of Daniel 7 to be an abomination that was prophesied to desolate.

1 Maccabees said that the temple was desolated in the sense that it looked like abandoned, damaged property. 1 Macc. 4:36-38 says:

> Then Judas, and his brethren said: Behold our enemies are discomfited: let us go up now to cleanse the holy places, and to repair them. And all the army assembled together, and they went up into mount Sion. And they saw the sanctuary desolate, and the altar profaned, and the gates burnt, and shrubs growing in the courts as in a forest or on the mountains, and the chambers joining to the temple thrown down.

The preceding passage may be factual. But it only sounds like a prophecy in Daniel if you are already predisposed to think so.

1 Macc. 3:45 Douay says:

> Now Jerusalem was not inhabited, but was like a desert: there was none of her children that went in or out: and the sanctuary was trodden down:

The language is reminiscent of Luke 21:24 and of the stamping and treading by beasts in Daniel 7 and 8. But the desolation of the temple predicted by Jesus of Nazareth, and explained by Luke, was the utter destruction of Jerusalem by an abominable Roman army. Jesus was not talking about repairable damage, like burned gates and shrubs growing in the courts of the temple. According to Luke 21:6 (Douay), Jesus said:

> These things which you see, the days will come in which there shall not be left a stone upon a stone that shall not be thrown down.

That desolation was to be performed by an army (Luke 21:20). It can be inferred from the parallel verses in Mark and Matthew that that army was the "abomination of desolation" of Daniel. The desolation and treading described in 1 Macc. 3:45 hardly compares with the desolation and treading that occurred in the first century and thereafter, the one predicted by Jesus.

Sir Isaac Newton acknowledged this manifest fact in chapter 9 of his Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel (1733):

> The horn cast down the Sanctuary to the ground, and so did not Antiochus, he left it standing.

The Maccabees had defeats as well as victories in their battles with the Seleucid Greeks, and there were no Divine miracles. The deliverance of the Jews from Antiochus was nothing like the miraculous deliverance promised in Deut. 30:1-5, where it was promised that God would gather all Israelites from everywhere and return them to Israel and bless them. Deut. 28:7 promised that if the Israelites hearkened to God's voice, their enemies would come against them one way and flee seven ways. In comparison with the promises in Deuteronomy and other examples of salvation, the deliverance by the Maccabees was petty, not Godlike, not Biblical. Anybody who thinks that Judas Maccabaeus's military campaign was guided by God has a very low opinion of the power of the God of the Bible. Jesus of Nazareth foretold a deliverance so miraculous that nobody would be able to deny it, which I mention in another chapter.

Chapter 5 describes how Joseph the son of Zacharias and Azarias the captain of the soldiers suffered a defeat. 1 Macc. 5:61-62 Douay explains the reason:

> Because they did not hearken to Judas, and his brethren, thinking that they should do manfully. But they were not of the seed of those men by whom salvation was brought to Israel.

The author wanted the reader to conclude that only a Hasmonean, specifically Judas, was destined to be God's appointed savior. Eleazar the son of Saura (1 Macc. 6:43-46) heroically died in battle when he killed an elephant in battle, in order "to get himself an everlasting name" (Douay). We know his name because it was written in a famous book, 1 Maccabees. The book doesn't say he was trying to get himself a resurrection, probably because the Jewish warriors didn't believe in it. They may have interpreted the resurrection in Daniel 12 figuratively, like the Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones in Ezekiel 37. The author of 1 Macc. didn't seem to be bothered by the fact that there were no supernatural miracles, even when Judas asked for them. Nor was the author disillusioned by the fact that Judas couldn't figure out what to do with the stones of the temple till a prophet would come (1 Macc. 4:44-46).

Earlier in this chapter, I said that 1 Maccabees appears to allude to Daniel, but that those allusions are not explicit, but rather are left up to the imagination of the reader. But it is certain that the author of the book and the Jews that he wrote about knew of the Book of Daniel. 1 Maccabees 2:59 Douay says:

> Ananias and Azarias and Misael by believing, were delivered out of the flame.

This is not an ambiguous statement like some that we find in 1 Maccabees and in Daniel chapter 11, but a definite reference to Daniel 3:88 (as numbered in the Douay):

> O Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, bless ye the Lord: praise and exalt him above all for ever. For he hath delivered us from hell, and saved us out of the hand of death, and delivered us out of the midst of the burning flame, and saved us out of the midst of the fire.

1 Maccabees 2:60 says:

> Daniel in his innocency was delivered out of the mouth of the lions.

Even though so much in this book and in Daniel 11 is not clear, this is a clear reference to Daniel chapter 6. Many Jews in Maccabean times believed in the resurrection of the dead, a doctrine of the Book of Daniel, chapter 12. The concept of martyrdom unto death in hope of resurrection comes from the Book of Daniel,

specifically from the two stories mentioned above. The book tells of many Jews who chose martyrdom rather than violate the Mosaic Law. 1 Macc. 1:63-66 Douay says:

> Now the women that circumcised their children, were slain according to the commandment of king Antiochus, And they hanged the children about their necks in all their houses, and those that had circumcised them, they put to death. And many of the people of Israel determined with themselves, that they would not eat unclean things: and they chose rather to die, than to be defiled with unclean meats: And they would not break the holy law of God, and they were put to death,

1 Macc. 2:37-38 Douay adds:

> Saying: Let us all die in our innocency: and heaven and earth shall be witnesses for us, that you put us to death wrongfully. So they gave them battle on the sabbath: and they were slain with their wives, and their children, and their cattle, to the number of a thousand persons.

The martyrs in the times of Antiochus were motivated by the promise of resurrection to everlasting life. That is why they said that they would rather die than be defiled with unclean food that profaned the holy covenant. That is how they could say: "Let us die all in our innocency". Those martyrs probably interpreted the stories about the fiery furnace and the lions' den like early Christians did. The stories were an encouragement to risk death if necessary, confident of the resurrection promised in Daniel 12.

Mattathias decided against nonviolent martyrdom as taught in the Book of Daniel when he saw that 1000 nonviolent martyrs were killed in the wilderness (1 Macc. 2:38). He simply thought it didn't work. 1 Macc. 2:39-41 Douay says:

> And Mathathias and his friends heard of it, and they mourned for them exceedingly. And every man said to his neighbour: If we shall all do as our brethren have done, and not fight against the heathens for our lives, and our justifications: they will now quickly root us out of the earth. And they determined in that day, saying: Whosoever shall come up against us to fight on the sabbath day, we will fight against him: and we will not all die, as our brethren that were slain in the secret places.

Mattathias didn't give a scriptural reason for fighting on the Sabbath. He only gave a worldly, faithless, practical reason: that otherwise the Jews would be exterminated. Mattathias didn't seem to really believe that the 1000 martyrs were going to be resurrected to everlasting life in accordance with Daniel 12:1-2. And he didn't have faith that God would deliver the Jews like He had done during the Exodus and at the time of Sennacherib. Mattathias didn't know before their deaths whether the 1000 martyrs would get a miraculous salvation from God like Daniel and the three youths in the Book of Daniel. But the miraculous salvation didn't happen. Like most people today, Mattathias wanted observable worldly results, not a hope based on faith. So he switched to another scriptural example to follow. He followed the example of Phineas in Numbers 25. He killed an apostate Jew and the messenger of the king (1 Macc. 2:19-26).

When Mattathias was about to die he gave a speech to his sons in which he mentioned Daniel and the three youths who were thrown into the fiery furnace in 1 Maccabees 2:59-60, quoted above. Mattathias didn't use those stories to recommend martyrdom to his sons. Notice that Mattathias said that Daniel and the three youths were all delivered. If Daniel had been killed by the lions, and if his three companions had been burned to death, they would have had to await a resurrection. They were prepared to die, but they didn't die. So Matthathias saw a different lesson in them than the Maccabean martyrs did. Mattathias gave examples of Bible characters who either got rewarded in this life or were rewarded with immortal remembrance, like Phineas, who received an everlasting priesthood (1 Macc. 2:54). David received an everlasting kingdom (verse 57). Mattathias summarized the difference between faithful Jews and sinners in 1 Macc. 2:62-64 Douay:

> And fear not the words of a sinful man: for his glory is dung, and worms: To day he is lifted up, and to morrow he shall not be found, because he is returned into his earth, and his thought is come to nothing. You therefore, my sons, take courage, and behave manfully in the law: for by it you shall be glorious.

Mattathias mentioned two alternatives, death or glory — but not resurrection[141]. All of the ancient worthies that he mentioned got a reward in this world. 1 Macc. 2:70 shows that Mattathias got some of the secular glory and remembrance that he thought was so important:

> And he died in the hundred and forty sixth year: and he was buried by his sons in the sepulchres of his fathers in Modin, and all Israel mourned for him with great mourning.

And Mattathias would be pleased to know that the exploits of his family are preserved today in some Bibles. And he would be pleased to know that some people are still searching for the tombs of the Maccabees. His bones may be found some day in a tomb inscribed with his name. That is the glory he hoped for.

This is in contrast to the spiritual, heavenly hopes of the author of the Epistle of Hebrews and other early Christians. Hebrews 11 mentions Abel, whose life would have seemed to be a failure to Mattathias if not for the fact that his name was immortalized in the Bible. Hebrews 11 refers to Daniel, Ananias, Azarias, and Misael in verses 33-34. Yet the author of Hebrews says in verse 39 that they received not the promise. Heb. 11:10, 16, and 19 make it clear that the reward that the ancient worthies were awaiting was life in God's heavenly city. The reward was not what Mattathias thought, not salvation and glory on this earth, nor even being mentioned in the Bible.

Mattathias believed in the Book of Daniel, but he misinterpreted it. Daniel and the others who risked martyrdom in the Book of Daniel were saved. They were not killed and didn't have to await an unseen and unverifiable resurrection. Besides the fact that their lives were saved, they actually did receive in this world the glory of everlasting remembrance in a famous book of the Bible[142].

---

141 Mattathias might have believed that the resurrection of Daniel 12 was figurative. Porphyry's explanations of the resurrection might have descended from an old Jewish interpretation. But Jesus said that the resurrection of Daniel 12 was literal, and even performed a resurrection to demonstrate it.

142 Eleazar the son of Saura (1 Macc. 6:43-46) heroically died in battle when he killed an elephant in battle, in order "to get himself an everlasting name" (Douay). We know his name because it was written in a famous book, 1 Maccabees. 1 Macc. doesn't say he was trying to get himself a resurrection, probably because the Jewish warriors didn't believe in it.

Judas Maccabeus led the Jews in battle after Mattathias's death. 1 Macc. 3:3 and 7 (Douay) say:

> And he got his people great honour, and put on a breast-plate as a giant, and girt his warlike armour about him in battles, and protected the camp with his sword. … And he grieved many kings, and made Jacob glad with his works, and his memory is blessed for ever.

Which verses show a preoccupation with achieving secular glory.

When about to fight Seron, the prince of the army of Syria, Judas says (1 Macc. 3:18-22 Douay):

> And Judas said: It is an easy matter for many to be shut up in the hands of a few: and there is no difference in the sight of the God of heaven to deliver with a great multitude, or with a small company: For the success of war is not in the multitude of the army, but strength cometh from heaven. They come against us with an insolent multitude, and with pride, to destroy us, and our wives, and our children, and to take our spoils. But we will fight for our lives and our laws. And the Lord himself will overthrow them before our face: but as for you, fear them not.

Judas did win that battle, even though outnumbered. And he achieved one of his worldly goals, fame. Verse 26 says:

> And his fame came to the king, and all nations told of the battles of Judas.

But Judas ceased to be confident that God would always save him. In chapter 8 he asked the Romans for help, since the Lord didn't keep overthrowing the enemies of Judea.

When about to fight Gorgias, Judas says (1 Macc. 4:8-11 Douay):

> And Judas said to the men that were with him: Fear ye not their multitude, neither be ye afraid of their assault. Remember in what manner our fathers were saved in the Red Sea, when Pharao pursued them with a great army. And now let us cry to heaven: and the Lord will have mercy on us, and will remember the covenant of our fathers, and will destroy this army before our face this day:

Judas defeated Gorgias even though greatly outnumbered.

When about to fight Lysias, Judas says (1 Macc. 4:30 Douay):

> And they saw that the army was strong, and he prayed, and said: Blessed art thou, O Saviour of Israel, who didst break the violence of the mighty by the hand of thy servant David, and didst deliver up the camp of the strangers into the hands of Jonathan the son of Saul, and of his armour-bearer.

The Jews won the battle. Judas was referring to 1 Samuel 14 (= 1 Kings 14 Douay), where verse 6 says:

> And Jonathan said to the young man that bore his armour: Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised, it may be that the Lord will do for us: because it is easy for the Lord to save either by many, or by few.

Mattathias and Judas Maccabeus were often unsure what to do and changed plans according to what seemed to be working.

1 Macc. 4:44-46 Douay says:

> And he considered about the altar of holocausts, that had been profaned, what he should do with it. And a good counsel came into their minds, to pull it down: lest it should be a reproach to them, because the Gentiles had defiled it, so they threw it down. And they laid up the stones in the mountain of the temple in a convenient place, till there should come a prophet, and give answer concerning them.

Judas repeatedly tried to follow one scriptural example after the other, hoping that God would bring victory for him. He couldn't ask a prophet, because there weren't any[143]. It never occurred to Judas that it might have been God's will that the temple be desolated because of Judah's sin.

In 1 Macc. 7:41-42 Douay, Judas prays:

> O Lord, when they that were sent by king Sennacherib blasphemed thee, an Angel went out, and slew of them a hundred and eighty five thousand: Even so destroy this army in our sight today, and let the rest know that he hath spoken ill against thy sanctuary: and judge thou him according to his wickedness.

---

143 See 1 Macc. 9:27 and 14:41.

But the Lord didn't send his angel. Judas had to fight the battle on his own. Verse 43 says:

> And the armies joined battle on the thirteenth day of the month Adar: and the army of Nicanor was defeated, and he himself was first slain in the battle.

Judas got more glory — a holiday to remember the victory, and therefore to remember Judas. Verse 49 says:

> And he ordained that this day should be kept every year, being the thirteenth of the month of Adar.

1 Macc. 7:50 says:

> And the land of Juda was quiet for a short time.

This does not at all sound like what God explained to the Jews in Deuteronomy 28-30. God was supposed to make victories easy for the Israelites. God didn't tell them in Deuteronomy that they would only be able to rest a little while between numerous hard-fought battles. So Judas now gives up on God after his great victories. 1 Macc. 8:1, 2, and 5 say in the Douay:

> Now Judas heard of the fame of the Romans, that they are powerful and strong, and willingly agree to all things that are requested of them: and that whosoever have come to them, they have made amity with them, and that they are mighty in power. And they heard of their battles, and their noble acts, which they had done in Galatia, how they conquered them, and brought them under tribute: … And that they had defeated in battle Philip, and Perses the king of the Ceteans, and the rest that had borne arms against them, and had conquered them[144]:

Instead of praying to God for salvation, Judas made a covenant with Rome to protect Israel, according to 1 Maccabees 8. Thus verses 18-20 say in the Douay:

> And that they might take off from them the yoke of the Grecians, for they saw that they oppressed the kingdom of Israel with servitude. And they went to Rome, a very long journey, and they entered into the senate-house, and said: Judas Machabeus, and his brethren, and the people of the Jews have

144 Two brothers of Judas renewed the league with the Romans after his death: Jonathan (1 Macc. 12:1) and Simon (1 Macc. 15:15-18).

> sent us to you to make alliance and peace with you, and that we may be registered your confederates and friends.

In chapter 10, Alexander, a pagan Greek king, makes Jonathan high priest. But the author of 1 Macc. does not object.

Other Hasmonean warlords renewed Judas's unscriptural treaty with the Romans. Eventually, Judea was devastated as a result.

Whenever Mattathias and Judas saw that God was not saving the Jews, they should have known that their own efforts wouldn't save them. That was a sign that God had abandoned the Jews because of sin.

## Some Faithful Ancients Disagreed With Mattathias's Interpretations of Daniel.

Some commentaries have said that whereas 1 Maccabees was written by a Sadducee who didn't believe in the resurrection, 2 Maccabees was written by a Pharisee who did. The deaths of martyrs are treated like a tragedy in 1 Macc., but 2 Macc. treats the martyrs as heroes and expects them to be resurrected.

Mattathias rejected the attitude of the martyrs in 1 Macc. chapter 1. Those martyrs didn't submit themselves to the threat of death, presuming that God would certainly save them like in the cases of Daniel[145], Ananias, Azarias, and Misael[146]. Those martyrs said that they would refuse to sin even if God didn't deliver them. They said:

> If it be *so*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up (Dan. 3:17-18 ASV).

---

145 Dan. 6:21-22: "Then said Daniel unto the king … My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me … ."

146 The king said in Dan. 3:25 ASV: "… Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the aspect of the fourth is like a son of the gods." Daniel 1:7 ASV says: "And the prince of the eunuchs gave names unto them: unto Daniel he gave *the name of* Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, *of Shadrach*; and to Mishael, *of* Meshach; and to Azariah, *of* Abednego."

Some Jews even after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes behaved like early Christians, in that they were willing to die passively, without fighting back, for the sake of their religion. For example Josephus tells the story in *Antiquities* 18:3:1:

> … Pilate, the procurator of Judea, removed the army from Cesarea to Jerusalem, to take their winter-quarters there, in order to abolish the Jewish laws. So he introduced Caesar's effigies, which were upon the ensigns, and brought them into the city; whereas our law forbids us the very making of images … . … on the sixth day he ordered his soldiers to have their weapons privately, while he came and sat upon his judgment-seat, which place was so prepared in the open place of the city, that it concealed the army that lay ready to oppress them; and when the Jews petitioned him again, he gave a signal to the soldiers to encompass them round, and threatened that their punishments should be no less than immediate death … but they threw themselves upon the ground, and laid their necks bare, and said they would take their deaths very willingly, rather than the wisdom of their laws should be transgressed … .

Those Jews must have been influenced by the examples of martyrdom in the Book of Daniel. They probably knew the martyrdom stories in 2 Macc. from the services at the Feast of Dedication, if from no other source.

Josephus tells a similar story in *Wars* 2.10.4. The Jews, who were opposed to the placing of images of Caius Caesar in the temple, tell Petronius in section 4:

> … "We offer sacrifices twice every day for Caesar, and for the Roman people;" but that if he would place the images among them, he must first sacrifice the whole Jewish nation; and that they were ready to expose themselves, together with their children and wives, to be slain.

Jesus and the Christians accepted death in the hope of a resurrection. See my chapter on the Epistle to the Hebrews for more about this.

Unlike Mattathias and Judas Maccabaeus, Jesus was righteous and endured unjust suffering without retribution. Christians followed Jesus's example. The Christian view is expressed in 1 Peter 2:21-23 (ASV):

> For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when

> he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

If Christians had thought it was wrong to fight on the Sabbath or to eat pork, they wouldn't have committed either sin even in the face of death.

## The Thinking of 2 Maccabees.

The purpose of the author of 2 Maccabees was to convince Egyptian Jews to celebrate two holidays honoring Judas Maccabaeus. The more famous of the two was the Feast of Dedication. The last chapter of the book also says that the killing of Nicanor should always be celebrated on the 13th day of Adar (2 Macc. 15:36-37). The book begins with two letters that try to convince Egyptian Jews to regard the temple at Jerusalem as being holy again, and also to convince them to observe the Feast of Dedication. So the first chapter of 2 Macc. includes a letter from the Jews in Jerusalem to the Jews in Egypt to encourage them to celebrate the new festival. 2 Macc. 1:9 concludes the first letter, saying:

> And now celebrate ye the days of Scenopegia in the month of Casleu[147].

2 Macc. reproduces a second letter from the Jews in Jerusalem to the Jews in Egypt urging them to celebrate the new festival. The letter urges the Jews of Egypt to celebrate the new festival, which the Douay again calls *Scenopegia* (the *Feast of Tabernacles* in Greek), in 2 Macc. 1:18:

> Therefore whereas we purpose to keep the purification of the temple on the five and twentieth day of the month of Casleu, we thought it necessary to signify it to you: that you also may keep the day of Scenopegia[148], and the day of the fire, that was given when Nehemias offered sacrifice, after the temple and the altar was built.

2 Macc. 2:16, which is also in the second letter that is reproduced in 2 Maccabees, says:

---

147 The word "scenopegia" in the Vulgate transliterates *σκηνοπηγια* in the LXX and means the feast of tabernacles in John 7:2.

148 The date, the 25th of Chislev, shows that the Feast of Dedication is meant.

> As we are then about to celebrate the purification we have written unto you: and you shall do well, if you keep the same days.

2 Macc. 10:5 says:

> Now upon the same day that the temple had been polluted by the strangers, on the very same day it was cleansed again, to wit, on the five and twentieth day of the month of Casleu.

The author of 2 Macc. did believe that the coincidence of the dates was by Divine guidance. But he didn't think it fulfilled any prophecy, or he would have said so. He knew that there was no two-year time prophecy in Daniel, and his readers did too. The author says how the Feast of Dedication was celebrated, saying in 2 Macc. 10:8:

> And they ordained by a common statute, and decree, that all the nation of the Jews should keep those days every year.

The purpose of that book was to encourage the yearly celebration of the Feast of Dedication each Casleu 25th, not to explain the Book of Daniel.

2 Maccabees contains numerous mistakes. Commentaries usually side with 1 Maccabees when the two books contradict each other. Some encyclopedias and commentaries devote long paragraphs describing the errors in the book. I will only quote a little criticism from encyclopedias in this chapter. But I will add my own criticism. I have already pointed out the purpose of the author of 2 Maccabees. I will also point out the faith that the Maccabean martyrs had in the resurrection, both because the Epistle to the Hebrews referred to them, and also because Jesus taught the necessity of the same kind of martyrdom.

Amazing visions and events are related throughout the entire book, most of which probably did not happen. 2 Macc. contains stories of visions of angels that supposedly helped the Jewish warriors. If angels were really helping the so-called Maccabees, why did they make an alliance with the Romans? Were the Romans better fighters than the angels?

2 Macc. 11:8 and 10 says:

> And when they were going forth together with a willing mind, there appeared at Jerusalem a horseman going before them in white cloathing, with golden armour, shaking a spear. … So they went on courageously, having a helper from heaven, and the Lord who shewed mercy to them.

Then Judas defeated Lysias.

2 Macc. 3:25-26 and 33-34 might refer to angels[149].

2 Macc. 10:29-31 says:

> But when they were in the heat of the engagement there appeared to the enemies from heaven five men upon horses, comely with golden bridles, conducting the Jews: Two of whom took Machabeus between them, and covered him on every side with their arms, and kept him safe: but cast darts and fire-balls against the enemy, so that they fell down, being both confounded with blindness, and filled with trouble. And there were slain twenty thousand five hundred, and six hundred horsemen.

That would indeed be a miraculous heavenly deliverance, like the ones Judas kept hoping and praying for, if it really happened. But none of the angelic deliverances mentioned in 2 Macc. are mentioned in 1 Maccabees. 2 Macc. 5:2-4 reports visions of angelic soldiers, but does not state that they performed a miraculous salvation. And 2 Macc. is our only source that this happened. The vision quoted earlier in chapter 11 is not reported in 1 Maccabees. I think that the false stories about angels were added to make Judas Maccabeus, a notoriously worldly man, appear to have God's favor. The campaign for the new holidays might not have been successful if the Egyptian Jews knew the whole truth about what kind of man Judas was.

Even though 2 Macc. makes many false statements, a Christian can't reject everything in the book because the Epistle to the Hebrews recommends some of the martyrs described in that book as good examples. Early Christians had an expectation of martyrdom and resurrection similar to the expectation of the martyrs at the time of Antiochus. The resurrection of the dead is taught in Daniel 12:1-2 and confessed in 2 Macc. by some of the martyrs. For example, see 2 Macc. 7:23, which I quoted earlier.

2 Macc. chapters 6 and 7 report the martyrdoms of Jews who refused to violate the Mosaic Law. 2 Macc. 6:10 reports that two women who circumcised their children were killed with their babies. 2 Macc. 6:11 reports that Jews who secretly celebrated the Sabbath in caves were killed. 2 Macc. 6:18-19 reports that Eleazar the chief of the scribes was killed for refusing to eat pork[150].

---

149 Or maybe Onias was behind the sights that terrified Heliodorus (2 Macc. 4:1.)

150 Leviticus 11:7-8

2 Macc. 7 reports the martyrdoms of a woman and her seven sons who refused to eat pork. Those Jews expected a resurrection as a reward for martyrdom.

The second son said in 2 Macc. 7:9 Douay:

> And when he was at the last gasp, he said thus: Thou indeed, O most wicked man, destroyest us out of this present life: but the King of the world will raise us up, who die for his laws, in the resurrection of eternal life.

The Maccabean martyrs may have been influenced by Job 10:8 and 19:25-27. But they got their belief in the resurrection and final judgment mostly from the Book of Daniel. God gave the Israelites a choice between blessings and curses in Deuteronomy 28-30. He treated the Israelites as a group then, instead of as individuals. Moses warned them that God would scatter them among the nations if they sinned, and they would worship foreign gods in another land (Deut. 4:28). The Mosaic Law didn't encourage martyrdom. God promised that He would gather the exiled Israelites and bring them back to Israel as a group after they had repented as a group. And at that time the Israelites would get temporal earthly blessings, but not eternal life. Deut. 4:40 ASV explains the reward:

> And thou shalt keep his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days in the land, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, for ever.

The land was Israel's inheritance (Deut. 4:38), not everlasting life. The best the Israelites could hope for was to prolong their days on the land promised to their forefathers (Deut. 4:1). The alternative was living in a foreign land again, serving as slaves like they did in Egypt, and worshipping foreign gods. Eternal life was not one of the alternatives offered.

2 Macc. 7:10-11 says concerning the third son:

> After him the third was made a mocking-stock, and when he was required, he quickly put forth his tongue, and courageously stretched out his hands: And said with confidence: These I have from heaven, but for the laws of God I now despise them: because I hope to receive them again from him.

2 Macc. 7:14 says concerning the fourth son:

> And when he was now ready to die, he spoke thus: It is better, being put to death by men, to look for hope from God, to be raised up again by him: for, as to thee thou shalt have no resurrection unto life.

The fourth son was thinking of Daniel 12:1-2, which says (in the ASV):

> And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince who standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Jesus later elaborated on Daniel 12:1-2 in John 5:25-29, saying :

> Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself: and he gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is a son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.

In 2 Macc. 7:36, the youngest son says:

> For my brethren having now undergone a short pain, are under the covenant of eternal life; but thou by the judgment of God shalt receive just punishment for thy pride.

So, the youngest son also expected to be resurrected to eternal life. The Maccabean martyrs probably considered the stories of Daniel in the lions' den (Dan. 6) and the story of the fiery furnace (Dan. 3) as examples that are essential to follow in order to get the reward of a resurrection (Dan. 12). Jesus made something like a covenant for everlasting life, by promising that anybody who confessed him in the face of death would be rewarded with everlasting life.

2 Macc. 8 reports that Judas Maccabeus collected an army of about 6,000 men and prayed to the Lord to avenge the deaths of the faithful martyrs, the desolation of

Jerusalem, and the defilement of the temple. The author of 2 Macc. 8:5 Douay suggests that the prayer was answered:

> Now when Machabeus had gathered a multitude, he could not be withstood by the heathens: for the wrath of the Lord was turned into mercy.

Verse 24 says:

> And the Almighty being their helper, they slew above nine thousand men: and having wounded and disabled the greater part of Nicanor's army, they obliged them to fly.

2 Macc. 8:27 says:

> … they kept the sabbath: blessing the Lord who had delivered them that day, distilling the beginning of mercy upon them.

But the opinion of the author is wrong. Judas did win many battles against the heathens, recapture Jerusalem, and restore temple worship. But his victories were not won by the help of the Almighty. In 2 Macc. 8:18-19, Judas tells his followers:

> For, said he, they trust in their weapons, and in their boldness: but we trust in the Almighty Lord, who at a beck can utterly destroy both them that come against us, and the whole world. Moreover he put them in mind also of the helps their fathers had received from God: and how under Sennacherib a hundred and eighty-five thousand had been destroyed.

But God did not deliver the Jews in a manner reminiscent of 2 Kings 19:35.

2 Maccabees is not a commentary on Daniel, but like 1 Macc., it uses terminology and phrases to suggest prophetic fulfillments to readers that happened to be predisposed to see them. For example, 2 Macc. 9:10 says:

> And the man that thought a little before he could reach to the stars of heaven … .

That passage may be an allusion to Dan. 8:10 (ASV):

> And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and some of the host and of the stars it cast down to the ground, and trampled upon them.

Or it may not be an allusion. 2 Maccabees and Daniel both might simply use common figures of speech. The author isn't clear.

An angel like the one who killed Sennacherib's army would have very quickly recovered the temple and the city. The Son of Man that Jesus spoke about could have used avenging angels exclusively, and didn't need any help from humans.

2 Macc. 10:3 says that only two years elapsed without lawful sacrifices:

> And having purified the temple, they made another altar: and taking fire out of the fiery stones they offered sacrifices after two years, and set forth incense, and lamps, and the loaves of proposition.

Almost all commentaries think that the period was three years, and that 2 Macc. is mistaken. How could such a mistake have been made if the number of years was predicted by Daniel? I answer that nobody thought that the time period of the desolation of that temple was a fulfillment of Daniel's prophecies till later, possibly the time of Josephus.

2 Macc. 10:6 says:

> And they kept eight days with joy, after the manner of the feast of the tabernacles, remembering that not long before they had kept the feast of the tabernacles when they were in the mountains, and in dens like wild beasts.

The fact that Judas was hiding in dens in the mountains disqualifies him from being the Son of Man of Daniel, who was to be a heavenly savior. Jesus was later to say in Matthew 24:23-27 ASV:

> Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or, Here; believe *it* not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you beforehand. If therefore they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the wilderness; go not forth: Behold, he is in the inner chambers; believe *it* not. For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the coming of the Son of man.

Jesus meant that a heavenly Son of Man wouldn't hide in the wilderness and fight a guerrilla war like the so-called Maccabees, the sons of Mattathias. A heavenly Son of Man, like the angel who destroyed Sennacherib's army in one night, would easily deliver God's people. Lysias sent an army of 80,000 against Jerusalem. 2 Macc. 11:2-4 Douay says:

> … thinking to take the city, and make it a habitation of the Gentiles: And to make a gain of the temple, as of the other temples of the Gentiles, and to set the high priesthood to sale every year: Never considering the power of God, but puffed up in mind, and trusting in the multitude of his foot soldiers, and the thousands of his horsemen, and his fourscore elephants.

But the Jews hoped for angelic deliverance, possibly thinking of Sennacherib's deliverance of Jerusalem. 2 Macc 11:6 says:

> But when Machabeus and they that were with him, understood that the strong-holds were besieged, they and all the people besought the Lord with lamentations and tears, that he would send a good Angel to save Israel.

In 2 Macc. 12:15-16, the author says that Judas asked for the kind of salvation that an angel performed for Joshua at Jericho, saying:

> But Machabeus calling upon the great Lord of the world, who without any rams or engines of war threw down the walls of Jericho in the time of Josue, fiercely assaulted the walls. And having taken the city by the will of the Lord, he made an unspeakable slaughter, so that a pool adjoining of two furlongs broad seemed to run with the blood of the slain.

But the author doesn't say that the angel actually cast down the walls of Casphin (Caspis), which was what Judas prayed for (verses 13-15). Then verse 22 says:

> But when the first band of Judas came in sight, the enemies were struck with fear, by the presence of God, who seeth all things, and they were put to flight one from another, so that they were often thrown down by their own companions, and wounded with the strokes of their own swords.

Whereas in 1 Macc. Judas did not seem to believe in the resurrection, in 2 Macc. Judas thought his soldiers could be resurrected despite idolatry. Judas sent money to Jerusalem for sacrifices to atone for the sins of certain Jews who died in combat with things consecrated to idols under their clothing (2 Macc. 12:39-45). He thought that his prayers and sacrifices would reconcile the dead sinners to God, so that they would still be resurrected. The Jews he prayed for were idolaters, not so different from Antiochus Epiphanes. 2 Macc. 12:43-44 says:

> And making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and

religiously concerning the resurrection. (For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead,)

2 Macc. 13:22-23 says:

> Again the king treated with them that were in Bethsura: gave his right hand: took theirs: and went away. He fought with Judas: and was overcome.

*Encyclopaedia Biblica* says[151]:

> The passage 13:$_{15\text{-}23}$ affords a striking example of perversion of the truth for the sake of glorifying the Jews. The successive defeats experienced by Judas and his allies in 163, as a result of which they were reduced to dire extremities (1 Macc. 6:$_{47\text{-}54}$), appear in 2 Macc. as a succession of brilliant and decisive victories for the Jews.

2 Macc. 14:46 says concerning the martyr Razis (Razias):

> And standing upon a steep rock, when he was now almost without blood, grasping his bowels, with both hands, he cast them upon the throng, calling upon the Lord of life and spirit, to restore these to him again: and so he departed this life.

This passage reconfirms that the author of 2 Macc. believed in the resurrection.

The author's concluding words in 2 Macc. 15:38-40 Douay prevent the book from being taken as history. The article in *Encyclopaedia Biblica* goes on to compare 1 and 2 Macc.:

> In the cases where they disagree in statements of fact, it is generally beyond question that the representation in 2 Macc. is incorrect. The order of events in 2 Macc., also, even in places where it might seem quite plausible if we had no means of testing it from without, is often shown by the clear and consistent account of 1 Macc. to be in reality sadly confused.

Second Maccabees is propaganda which happens to contain some history. The purpose of the book is given in 2 Macc. 1:18 and 2 Macc. 1:9, which exhort the Egyptian Jews to celebrate the feast of tabernacles in the month of Casleu. It is stated

---

151 In the long article under the heading MACCABEES (BOOKS). Column 2871. Vol. 3, L to P.

later in the book that annual celebrations had been decreed to celebrate both the Feast of Dedication and the victory over Nicanor. Since 2 Macc. makes many false statements, the only reason that Christians should believe the stories of the martyrs is that the Epistle to the Hebrews cites them. I mentioned elsewhere that Mattathias and his friends thought that the martyrdom of the Jews who wouldn't fight on the sabbath was in vain. So what are we to think of the story in 2 Macc. 12:39-45, where Judas thinks that certain Jews, whom God killed because of their idolatry, will be resurrected if Judas and the survivors atone for their sins with sacrifices and prayers? Where in the Book of Daniel or elsewhere in the Hebrew Scriptures are we told that an idolatrous Israelite could get resurrected as a result of gifts of silver and a funeral service? Wasn't the resurrection of Dan. 12:2 for the righteous, not for the unrighteous? Why did Mattathias refuse to sacrifice when asked to in 1 Macc. 2? Will the Jews mentioned in 1 Macc. 1, who sacrificed to idols and profaned the Sabbath, be forgiven and resurrected? Did the Maccabean martyrs who refused to sacrifice to idols die in vain? Could the Maccabean martyrs mentioned in 1 and 2 Macc. have eaten pork, discontinued circumcision, fought on the Sabbath and been forgiven, provided that enough important people prayed for them, and provided that enough silver was collected for a sin offering? I think that many ancient readers suspected strongly that Judas did NOT believe in the resurrection, and so the author of 2 Macc. added verse 44 to convince them otherwise. The writer of 2 Macc. had to overcome Judas's reputation if the Festival of Dedication had any chance of being adopted among the Egyptian Jews.

To summarize, in this chapter I have pointed out the purposes of 2 Macc., to publicize the necessity of celebrating Judas's defeat of Nicanor and especially the necessity of celebrating the Feast of Dedication. The book is not a commentary on Daniel. It has some seeming, but uncertain allusions to Daniel. I cited only a small number of the errors out of those which are detailed in reference works about the book. We should notice that neither Jesus nor Luke referred to the book. Many scholars, taking this book of lies too seriously, have been misled by Nestle's theory, which is based partly on 2 Macc. 6:2. After being convinced that the abomination of desolation is a pun, a reader of 2 Macc. is blinded to the definition given by Luke. Yet the stories of the Maccabean martyrs had to be at least based on true history, or else the Epistle to the Hebrews wouldn't have referred to them.

# English Mistranslations of Daniel 11:31 and 12:11.

This book is about Luke and about his interpretations of Daniel. But I have to make numerous digressions to defend him. Mistranslations of Daniel 11:31 and 12:11 lead people to believe that the abomination is an idol, not a beast or army. In this chapter I maintain that English Bibles mistranslate Daniel 11:31 and 12:11 in a prejudiced and indefensible manner to make the reader think that the abomination of desolation is an idol. And I show that if the Hebrew verbs in those passages were translated as in 2 Chronicles 17:2, the reader could understand the abomination of desolation as armies, the same way Luke interpreted the expression.

English Bible translations usually translate Daniel 11:31 and 12:11 with verbs like "set up" and "place", giving the impression that the abomination of desolation is something inanimate. The translators are inclined to interpret "the abomination of desolation" as an idol because of traditional interpretations. Because of the way those two passages are worded, a reader indoctrinated by translators will think that the abomination of desolation in Dan. 9:27, and also in the gospel verses that contain the expression, is an idol or altar. English-speakers don't speak of beasts or armies being set up. But they can easily imagine that Dan. 11:31 and 12:11 are about idols when they read an inaccurate translation of the verb.

I contradict the traditional interpretation in this book and say that the abomination of desolation of Mark 13:14, Matt. 24:15, and Daniel 9:27[152] is the abominable Roman army (Dan. 9:26 and Luke 21:20), which is equivalent to the abominable desolating beast of Daniel chapter 7. Luke simply eliminated the obscure metaphor of the fourth beast and substituted its meaning, armies, in Luke 21. The Hebrew verbs used in the two passages under discussion support Luke's interpretation.

Whether they are aware of it or not, translators are influenced by 1 Macc. 1:54 (1 Macc. 1:57 Douay), which says in the Douay:

> On the fifteenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred and forty fifth year, king Antiochus **set up** the abominable idol of desolation upon the altar of God … .

That verse does speak of setting up "the abominable idol of desolation". But I say in this book that 1 Macc. should have no influence upon the interpretation of Daniel. The

152 See the LXX and the Douay.

author of that book may indeed have been suggesting an interpretation for the Book of Daniel. But if so, he was wrong.

Here are a few examples of the many wrong translations[153]:

- Dan. 11:31 (ASV): And forces shall stand on his part, and they shall profane the sanctuary, even the fortress, and shall take away the continual *burnt-offering*, and they shall **set up** the abomination that maketh desolate.
- Daniel 11:31 (JPS[154]): And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall profane the sanctuary, even the stronghold, and shall take away the continual burnt-offering, and they shall **set up** the detestable thing that causeth appalment.
- Daniel 12:11 (JPS): And from the time that the continual burnt-offering shall be taken away, and the detestable thing that causes appalment **set up**, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.
- Daniel 12:11 (Geneva Bible): And from the time that the dailie *sacrifice* shal be taken away, and the abominable desolation **set up**, there *shall* be a thousand, two hundreth and ninetie dayes.

Brenton's translation of the Septuagint, the Douay, and other translations also say "set up" in Dan. 12:11. The Hebrew verb in these verses of Daniel that some translators render "set up" can be used in several senses. But it does not mean "to set up". The verb *nathan* is not used for the setting up or construction of altars or idols. But translators have become convinced that it means "to set up" (or "to place") because of the influence of the Books of the Maccabees.

The most common meaning of the verb *nathan* (which is used in these passages) in the Book of Daniel is "to give". This must be why Young's Literal Translation says "**the giving out** of the desolating abomination" in Dan. 12:11. Here is one of six occurrences of the verb from the Book of Daniel alone listed in Young's 1881 concordance under the heading "**GIVE, to, −**", under the very long section for signification # 10, *To give … nathan …*[155]:

Dan 1:12: let them give us pulse to eat, and water

153 I use bold type for the mistranslated verbs.

154 The Jewish Publication Society translation; see bibliography.

155 Analytical Concordance to the Bible, etc., by Robert Young. Fourth Revised Edition (New York, 1881). The entry for signification #10 begins on page 392, but the entry is so long that the quotation from Dan. 1:12 is on page 395.

Young devoted several pages with hundreds of what he called "parallel passages" that used the verb *nathan* in this sense. There are other occurrences of the verb *nathan* used in the same sense in Daniel. But I will omit them to save time and list the entries from Young's concordance for the two occurrences that supposedly — in the imaginations of translators, anyway — describe setting up or placing the abomination of desolation.

Even though Robert Young didn't say "set up" in this verse in the YLT (his 1863 translation), he lists Dan. 12:11, all by itself, under signification #6 under the heading "**SET up, to −**", because his concordance is based on the King James Version, not his own translation:[156]

> 6. *To give (up, forth), … nathan*
>
> Dan. 12:11: abomination that maketh desolate set up

So the verb *nathan*, meaning "to give", was used in Daniel 12:11. The KJV and many other translations translated it as "set up". Notice that Young gave only this one passage where *nathan* means "set up" in signification number 6. There are no other occurrences in the Hebrew Scriptures besides Dan. 12:11 where the verb *nathan* has the same meaning. And I mentioned earlier that Young needed several pages of fine type to list the verses where *nathan* means "give". Should we believe the translators who give this verb a unique and otherwise unattested meaning in Dan. 12:11?

This is suspicious, since other Hebrew verbs are found under Young's heading, "**SET up, to −**", which are regularly used in the King James Version to mean "to construct" or "to set upright". For example, see signification #4 under the same heading, a little above Young's unconvincing entry for Daniel 12:11. A different Hebrew verb (*natsab*) is used by the KJV in Gen. 35:14, Joshua 6:26, 1 Sam. 15:12, 1 Kings 16:34, 2 Kings 17:10, and Jer. 31:21 for setting up a stone pillar, gates, a place (a monument according to commentaries), images, (sacred) groves, way marks (or guideposts), etc. Why didn't the author of Daniel 12:11 use this verb *natsab* instead of *nathan* in Dan. 12:11? The problem was not that the author of Dan. 12:11 spoke poor Hebrew and used the wrong word by mistake. The author of the passage simply was not saying what translators wish he had said. He didn't mean that the abomination was set up, and *nathan* simply does not mean "to set up". If the author of Dan. 12:11

---

156 On page 868.

would arise from the dead and read our translations and commentaries, he would think that our translators are crazy.

But some commentators think that Matthew 24 refers to the setting up of the abomination of desolation, not in the sense of setting up idols, but in the sense of lifting Roman ensigns or standards. Consider signification #5, which is between the two headings I have mentioned, all of them in the same column and on the same page, under Young's heading, "**SET up, to −**". Signification #5 is about yet another Hebrew verb meaning "to set up" (*nasa*). Young's entries from the KJV are as follows:

> 5. *To lift up … nasa.*
>
> Isa. 11.12 he shall set up an ensign for the nations
>
> 45.20 that set up the wood of their graven
>
> Jer. 4.6 Set up the standard toward Zion: retire
>
> 6.1 and set up a sign of fire in Beth-haccerem
>
> 50.2 Set up a standard: publish, (and) conceal
>
> 51.12 Set up the standard upon the walls of B.
>
> 51.27 *Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the*

If the abomination of desolation referred to the Roman idolatrous ensigns, wouldn't *nasa* have been an appropriate verb? As you can see from the illustrative passages for signification 5 above, *nasa* was used for ensigns, wood of graven images, standards, and signs. But the reason *nasa* does not occur in Dan. 12:11 is that the author of these passages knew what the abomination of desolation was. And it was not an ensign or anything else that is lifted up! The abomination of desolation was what Luke said it was.

Signification #10 under Young's heading, "**SET up, to −**", is too long to copy since it has about 30 illustrative passages[157]. Here are a few:

> 10. *To cause to rise up … qum*, 5.

157 I think that Young called these lists of verses that use a word in the same sense "parallel passages".

Exod. 40. 2 shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the te.

Deut. 27. 2 thou shalt set thee up great stones, and

Judg 18. 30 the children of Dan set up the graven im.

1 Ki. 7. 21 he set up the right pillar, and called the

Dan. 2. 21 he removeth kings, and setteth up kings

3. 1 he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the

The passages above show that the verb *qum* was used for setting up the tabernacle, for setting up stones and a pillar, for setting up a graven image, for setting up Nebuchadnezzar's image in the plain of Dura, and for setting up kings. Why was this common word not used for setting up the abomination of desolation in Dan. 12:11? Because the author of this verse knew that the abomination of desolation was not a stone or an idolatrous statue that could be set up! It was a beast in Daniel 7 and an army in Daniel 9. You can't set up a beast or an army.

The correct translation of *nathan* in Dan. 12:11 probably is the word "placed", but only in the same sense in which Dan. 11:31 should be read, which I will discuss below.

Young's concordance has a heading for the other offending passage, Daniel 11:31, under the heading, "**PLACE, (to give or have) –**"[158]. Signification #5 under that heading reads:

5. *to give … nathan.*

2 Ch. 17. 2 he placed forces in all the fenced cities

Isa. 46. 13 will place salvation in Zion, for Israel

Eze. 37. 26 I will place them, and multiply them, and

Dan. 11. 31 they shall place the abomination that

2 Chron. 17:2 is in the list. 2 Chronicles 17:1-2 ASV says:

> And Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead, and strengthened himself against Israel. And he **placed** forces in all the fortified cities of Judah, and set

158 Page 756.

garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim, which Asa his father had taken.

The salvation that God promised to place in Zion in Isaiah 46:13 was apparently provided by Cyrus the Persian. Verse 11 says that God would call "a ravenous bird from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country". The preceding verses show that the chapter is about the downfall of Babylon. Cyrus led the Persians to defeat Babylon. Cyrus's proclamation releasing the Jews from Babylonia is found in Ezra 1:1-8. Cyrus was their savior. The expression “to place salvation” sounds strange to English ears. The phrase "I bring near my righteousness" appears to be synonymous with the phrase "I will place salvation" in Isaiah 46:13 ASV:

> I **bring** near my **righteousness**, it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will **place**[159] **salvation** in Zion for Israel my glory.

Abstract ideas like righteousness are not normally thought of as being moved any more than salvation. The language is poetic. Yet Isaiah 46:13 really seems to be saying that God would place or relocate his salvation.

But, in view of the other parallel passages, the abstract nouns "righteousness" and "salvation" might signify concrete ideas. For example, Matthew Poole's footnote on "I shall place salvation in Zion"[160] reads:

> I will bring my People from Babylon to Zion, and there I will save them from all their Enemies.

Luke 2:26 says that Simeon would not die till he had "seen the Lord's Christ". After seeing Jesus, Simeon was ready to die because he had seen God's salvation (verse 30). Matthew Poole and some other commentators have thought (obviously) that the

---

159 The ASV footnote on the verb place says: "Or, give salvation in Zion, and my glory unto Israel." The translators recognized that the fundamental meaning of *nathan* is "to give". And by giving such a different alternative translation, they are acknowledging that there is uncertainty in the translation. Earlier in the book, I quoted Cornelius a Lapide, who wrote: *ET DABUNT (id est ponent) ABOMINATIONEM (id est simulacrum Jovis Olympii) IN DESOLATIONEM*. He recognized that the verb *dabunt* (= "they will give") meant *ponent* (= "they will place"), but he was misled by thinking that the abomination that was placed was an idol instead of an army.

160 Annotations upon the Holy Bible, etc., in two volumes, by Matthew Poole (London, 1696 and 1700).

word "salvation" is used to mean the "author of salvation" or "savior". Here is another passage where the abstract word should be taken in a concrete sense. It is not likely that Isaiah 46:13 is saying that God would place Cyrus, his savior, in Zion. Instead, Poole's explanation that *salvation = God's people* seems more likely there.

Ezekiel 37 contains one of the illustrative passages mentioned above. It is about the hope that the Jews who were exiled in Babylon would return to Israel. Thus verses 24-26 read in the ASV:

> And my servant David shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in mine ordinances, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, they, and their children, and their children's children, for ever: and David my servant shall be their prince for ever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will **place**[161] them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

God was promising to "place" the Jews in the sense of relocating them from Babylon to the land of Israel.

None of the passages that Young's concordance lists with the verb *nathan* in signification #5 above is about setting up an idol or altar. Daniel 11:31 is in that list and should be interpreted in the light of its parallel passages. In Ezekiel, people are relocated. Isaiah 46 says that salvation would be placed in Zion. That language is poetic, but the passage may have a similar meaning to Ezekiel 37:26. It refers to the salvation of the Jews by Cyrus, and Cyrus moved or relocated Jews. 2 Chronicles is not about the placing of idols or altars. Jehoshaphat placed or located military forces and garrisons in the land of Israel.

Luke said that the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet was an army that would compass Jerusalem. An army can be moved or relocated as in 2 Chron. 17:2, which uses the verb *nathan*. First-century Jewish Christians readers knew about the fourth beast of Daniel 7:7, which was "terrible and powerful, and

---

161 A footnote at the word "place" in the ASV says: "Or, give it them". This footnote is a reminder that the basic sense of the verb "nathan" is "to give", and the other definitions are derived from it.

strong exceedingly". They knew that the fourth beast was a fourth kingdom which would devour the whole earth, tread it down, and break it in pieces. Even Josephus seems to have understood the fourth beast as Rome. Luke (and therefore Jesus) seems to have linked that prophecy with Daniel 9:26-27 and believed that the fourth beast of Daniel 7 was the people of the prince who would come, and who would destroy the city and the sanctuary. Daniel 9:27 calls that fourth beast “the abomination of desolation”, or “the abominating desolation”, or “the abomination that makes desolate”. Daniel 11:31 and 12:11 seem to refer to the movement or relocation of the Roman army.

I will summarize the facts I have given about Daniel 11:31 (which uses the verb *nathan*):

- The fragment of the verse quoted in Young's concordance from the KJV is "they shall place the abomination that". Even though the KJV translators were probably incorrectly thinking about placing an idol or altar, they correctly translated the verb.
- Even though the KJV translated the verb correctly, other translations don't. For example, the same fragment of Dan. 11:31 in the ASV is "they shall set up the abomination that" … . And Young's Literal Translation is incorrect.
- Young's Concordance classifies Dan. 11:31 under the fifth signification of the heading "**PLACE, (to give or have) −**", which reads: "5. *to give … nathan.*" Young meant that the most common meaning of *nathan* was "to give". The passages with the verb *nathan* that Young considers parallel are about relocation, not about giving, and not about setting up anything. Even though "to give" is the basic sense of the Hebrew verb *nathan*, the idiomatic sense of "to place" or "to relocate" exists in several scriptures.

Here is a summary of the facts I gave about Daniel 12:11 (which also uses the verb *nathan*):

- The fragment of the KJV mistranslation quoted by Young's concordance is "abomination that maketh desolate set up".
- Because Young's concordance is based on the KJV, this passage is under the English heading "**SET up, to −**".
- Young classified Dan. 12:11 under signification #6: "*6. To give (up, forth), … nathan"*

Young's entry of Dan. 12:11 is the only illustrative passage listed, and nothing in the concordance substantiates the KJV translation. Since *nathan* in the sense of "set up" is fictitious, it naturally follows that Young couldn't find any uses of the verb in this sense in any other scriptures. Knowing that the KJV translation was wrong, but not understanding the real meaning, Robert Young rendered *nathan* as "giving out" in his own translation of this verse. If he had known that the abomination of desolation really was an army, just like Luke said, he wouldn't have had trouble making sense of the verse.

If the verb *nathan* in 2 Chronicles 17:2 has the same sense, Dan. 11:31 and 12:11 could be translated and interpreted as shown below, based on the ASV readings (since I avoid using the KJV):

- 2 Chron. 17:2: … he **placed** (*nathan*) forces in all the fortified cities
- Daniel 11:31: And forces shall stand on his part, and they shall profane the sanctuary, even the fortress, and shall take away the continual burnt-offering, and they shall **place/ locate** (*nathan*) the [military forces called] the abomination that maketh desolate.
- Dan. 12:11: And from the time that the continual burnt-offering shall be taken away, and [the military forces called] the abomination that maketh desolate **placed/ located** (*nathan*) … .

If the abomination of desolation in Dan. 11:31 and 12:11 had really been an idol or standard, *nathan* would not have been the right verb. The writer of these passages might have either used the Hebrew verb *qum* (= Signification #10 under Young's heading, "**SET up, to −**"), or the Hebrew verb *nasa* (= Signification #5 under Young's heading, "**SET up, to −**"). And if the writer of Daniel had used either of those verbs, I would not be complaining about mistranslations now.

Jeremiah 32:34 says: "they set their abominations in the house which is called by my name …". The context is about idolatry. Some kind of idol was placed or set up in the temple, maybe the one Manasseh was responsible for. Since the event was supposedly analogous to the one in Daniel 11:31 and 12:11, it would have supported the offending translators if the Hebrew verb *nathan* was used for the setting of the abominations. But still another Hebrew verb was used, *sum* or *sim*, which is Young's signification number 33 under the word "**SET**".

## The Expression "Son of Man".

Throughout this book I say that Luke explained confusing passages and errors in Matthew and Mark. It surprises me that Luke assumed that Theophilus understood the expression "Son of Man" if he was a Roman official new to Christianity. Maybe Luke gave Theophilus a copy of a gospel that he had written earlier for Christians. I will explain the expression the way I understand it.

**"Son of man" is a pleonasm meaning "man".** Psalm 144:3 ASV says:

> Jehovah, what is «man», that [thou takest knowledge of him]? Or «the son of man», that [thou makest account of him]?

This Psalm uses synonymous parallelism. I added angular quotation marks and brackets to point it out. "Man" in the first clause is synonymous with "son of man" in the second clause, just as "takest knowledge of him" is synonymous with "makest account of him". In literal translations, Numbers 23:19, Job 35:8, and Job 25:6 also use "man" synonymously with "son of man."

The use of more words than necessary is common in Greek and Latin literature and is called a pleonasm[162]. "Son of man" is pleonastic because we already know that every man is a son of a man. So why not just say "man", instead of wasting words? Pleonasms complicate Bible study, as do other figures of speech. A lot of this book is devoted to explanations of figures of speech.

**"One like a son of man" means "one resembling a man", but not "a man".** The "one in the likeness of the sons of men" in Dan. 10:16 means the same as "one like the appearance of a man" in Dan. 10:18, and both expressions mean "resembling a man". The living creatures in both of those passages were probably either real angels or else visions of angels that looked like men. If the creatures in Dan. 10:16 and 18 really were men, the modifiers "one in the likeness of" and "like the appearance of" wouldn't have been added.

---

162 Peter Bullions says in § 150 of the 1850 edition of *The Principles of Latin Grammar* (New York 1850): «2. PLEONASM, is using a greater number of words than is necessary, to express the meaning; as, Sic ore locuta est, "thus she spoke with her mouth." − Virg.» The point is that the phrase "with her mouth" is a waste of words. If we are told that somebody spoke, we don't have to be told that he spoke with his mouth.

Daniel saw four beasts, one like a lion (verse 4), one like a bear (verse 5), one like a leopard (verse 6), and a terrible beast different from the preceding three. The living creature in Daniel 7:13 resembled a son of man, a human being. They weren't a real lion, bear, leopard, and man.

**The simplest use of "Son of Man" with a definite article is a reference to the particular son of man in Daniel 7:13.** Jesus's references to the “Son of Man” are sometimes specifically to "one like unto a son of man"[163] in Daniel 7:13. For example, when Jesus spoke of the Son of man seated at the right hand of the power of God (Luke 24:7), he meant “the one like a Son of man mentioned in Daniel 7:13 seated at the right hand of the ancient of days …”. Luke 22:69, 17:26-30, and 21:27 all refer to the particular son of man in Daniel 7:13-14. So does Acts 7:56.

**Jesus thought that Michael of Daniel 12 was the Son of Man of Daniel 7.** Matthew 25:31 refers to the Son of Man on his throne surrounded by angels. The verses that follow show a separation of people according to whether they were righteous or not. Verse 46 says the two outcomes are eternal punishment and eternal life. Matthew 25 seems to combine Daniel 7:13-14 with Daniel 12:1-3, which would make Michael the Son of Man. This helps to explain why Jesus would speak of the Son of man having authority to forgive sins (Luke 5:24). He would need to forgive the sins of those that he grants everlasting life to. Daniel 7 doesn't suggest that the Son of Man would be able to forgive sins, but Michael judges people, giving the righteous everlasting life (Daniel 12:2).

**Jesus may have sometimes used the expression as an alternate name, like a stage name, in the same way John the Baptist did.** In John 1:19, priests and Levites asked John "Who art thou?" They asked him specifically if he was the Christ, Elijah, or the Prophet, since they were Scriptural individuals that the Pharisees thought were prophesied to come again. John's answer is in verse 23:

---

163 JPS and ASV. The KJV says: "one like the son of man," which is wrong. With the definite article, the passage no longer means “one like a human being”. The KJV sounds like Daniel is referring to one specific individual called “the Son of Man”. The Christian Scriptures do use the expression with the definite article, because those verses are referring to the “one like a Son of Man” in Daniel chapter 7. If Dan. 7:13 was referring to a Son of Man in an already-existing book or myth, it would make sense to say "one like **the** Son of Man". But that is not the case.

> He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said Isaiah the prophet.

John the Baptizer was making an allusion to Isaiah 40:3. The Pharisees knew Isaiah 40:3 and Daniel 7:13. But they didn't think that the individuals described in those verses were destined to come again. They were looking for the Prophet foretold in Deut. 18:18-19, the Christ (Messiah)[164], and Elijah (Malachi 4:5).

Notice that the question was not: "What scripture are you fulfilling?" It was: "Who are you?" They were ready for an answer: "I am Christ" or "I am the Prophet." John the Baptist began his answer in the expected form: "I am … ." But he departed from the expected form with his quotation from Isaiah. The scriptural passage was a shortened way of saying: “I am the person spoken about in Isaiah 40. I was foretold to lead the people to repentance to make them ready for the Lord. Read Isaiah 40 again if you want to understand more about me.” Likewise the Pharisees spoke of “the Prophet” and “Elijah”, not in the normal usages of the words, but as literary allusions to the prophet to come in Deut. 18 and to Elijah to come Malachi 4.

Mark 9:11-13 says that the apostles who saw the transfiguration asked a question which Jesus answered this way:

> And they asked him, saying, *How is it* that the scribes say that Elijah must first come? And he said unto them, Elijah indeed cometh first, and restoreth all things: and how is it written of the Son of man, that he should suffer many things and be set at nought? But I say unto you, that Elijah is come, and they have also done unto him whatsoever they would, even as it is written of him.

The scribes were looking for a Biblical character who was prophesied to come. Notice that Jesus called John the Baptist Elijah, a Biblical character. A little earlier I mentioned that John the Baptist spoke of himself in the third person. He didn't answer the question: "Who art thou?" by saying "I am John the son of Zacharias the priest and Elisabeth" (Luke 1:5). Strangely, he said he was a certain scripture. In some passages Jesus talks about the Son of Man in the third person, but, however strange it seems to us, he is talking about himself.

**Jesus referred additional prophecies to the Son of Man.** Luke 9:22 is similar to Mark 9:11-13, quoted above. Jesus made a similar statement soon thereafter (Luke 9:44):

---

164 Possibly because of Dan. 9:26-27.

> Let these words sink into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered up into the hands of men.

Later Luke added a scripture newly referred to the Son of Man. Luke 11:30 says:

> For even as Jonah became a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

One of the verses above claims that it was written that the Son of man "would suffer many things". Jesus believed that the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 was the Son of Man of Daniel 7. Luke revealed this when he wrote Acts 8 about the Ethiopian eunuch. Jesus read Isaiah 53 to mean that the Suffering Servant would be betrayed to be abused by the gentiles (Luke 18:31-33). And Jesus considered the Suffering Servant to be the same Scriptural person as the "Son of Man".

It is surprising that Jesus would combine scriptures that don't seem to pertain to the Son of Man with Daniel 7. But he did. Another surprising thing is that when Jesus was on earth he was a man, and therefore a son of man. He was not "like a son of man" till he was resurrected and was no longer a man. But the Suffering Servant and Jonah were sons of men, or men. In the culture he lived in, Jesus was expected to say either that he was Elijah or the Prophet or the Messiah, or some other Bible character. He called himself the Son of Man. And he didn't restrict the term to the heavenly Son of Man.

**Did the Pharisees understand that Jesus was calling himself the Messiah when he called himself the Son of Man? Probably not.** I think that Vincent Henry Stanton wrote a correct explanation of this[165]:

> Not to mention later Rabbinic writings, the words in question are interpreted as referring to the Messiah in the Talmud. Again, in iv. Esdras, which it will be remembered is usually assigned to the close of the first century, in a vision which appears to be moulded on that in Dan. vii., a man who rises from the sea and flies with the clouds of heaven, represents the Messiah. Nevertheless, the evidence of the Gospels appears to be conclusive that "the Son of Man" was not popularly understood as a title of the Messiah in the time of our Lord. Not only is it never used as such by Jews, but they show that they were perplexed by Christ's use of it. "We have

165 Pages 240-1. The Jewish and the Christian Messiah: A Study in the Earliest History of Christianity, by Vincent Henry Stanton (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1886).

> heard out of the Law," say the multitude at Jerusalem during the last week, "that the Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest thou, that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this — 'the Son of Man'?" Our Lord's own employment of the term seems to point to the same conclusion. It will hereafter be seen that up to the end of His Galilean ministry He avoided making any open declaration of His Messiahship.

Why didn't Jesus call himself something that the Pharisees would understand? Because his understanding of the Scriptures was different from theirs, and he didn't want to cater to them by using their terms. The fact that the Pharisees often didn't understand what Jesus meant also helped him stay alive longer. I mentioned earlier that priests and Levites gave John three choices when they asked him who he was: "the Christ, Elijah, or the Prophet". John gave an unexpected answer that probably didn't make sense to them, that he was "the voice of one crying in the wilderness". If John had said in Judea, which was the stronghold of the Pharisees, that he was the Elijah-to-come, he might have been murdered before Herod could get a hold of him[166].

## The Son of Man Is Not Israel.

Many commentaries say that the expression "Son of Man" in Daniel 7 means the nation of Israel. Although the argument seems plausible, it is not the teaching of the Christian Scriptures[167]. V.H. Stanton wrote a common opinion on page 240 of the book I just quoted:

> We have seen that in the mind of the prophet the Israelite nation was probably intended by the figure of "one like unto a Son of Man." In the context the heathen powers are clearly symbolized by various beasts, and the

---

166 See John 11:7-8.

167 Notice Stephen's statement and the Jews' reaction in Acts 7:55-59. Stephen said: "… Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." It wouldn't make sense to understand him as saying that he saw the nation of Israel standing at God's right hand. Whatever he meant prompted the Jews to stone him to death. Stephen was talking about Jesus. So Stephen's dying words were "… Lord Jesus, receive my spirit", not "Nation of Israel, receive my spirit", or "Judas Maccabaeus, receive my spirit".

chosen people would seem to be symbolized, in contrast with these, by the noble human form. And with this agrees the explanation of the vision given in the latter part of the same chapter, where the collective body of "the saints of the Most High" exactly takes the place of the "one like unto a Son of Man."

Stanton added this footnote:

> See vv. 15-28, especially vv. 18, 22, 27.

The argument suggested by the footnote is a syllogism:

- The saints of the Most High will be given the kingdom (Dan. 7:18, 22, and 27).
- The Son of Man will be given the kingdom (Dan. 7:13-14).
- Therefore, the saints of the Most High are the Son of Man.

But a syllogism can be false. Here is one example of many that could be cited:

- Jehovah performed the signs and wonders in Egypt with his mighty hand (Deut. 7:18, 19).
- Moses performed the signs and wonder in Egypt with his mighty hand (Deut. 34:10-12).
- Therefore, Jehovah is Moses.

The meaning of the word "kingdom" varies throughout the Bible. There is evidence that for "the saints of the most High" to receive the kingdom means something different than for the “one like a son of man” to receive the kingdom. In Exodus 19:5-6 ASV, God tells Moses to tell the Israelites:

> Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and **ye shall be unto me a kingdom** of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

So the Bible says that the children of Israel were destined to be a kingdom. This is probably the meaning of Dan. 7:18, 22, and 27. The promise of Ex. 19:5-6 was not forgotten by Christians. Thus Revelation 5:9-10 ASV says:

> And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood *men* of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and

madest them ***to be*** **unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon earth**.

Rev. 11:15 ASV says:

> And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, The kingdom of the world is become *the kingdom* of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever.

But how can Rev. 11:15 ASV say that the Lord and his Christ got the kingdom after chapter 5 has already said that "men of every tribe and tongue and people and nation" were "a kingdom unto God"? Rev. 22:3-5 says:

> And there shall be no curse any more: and **the throne of God and of the Lamb** shall be therein: and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* on their foreheads. And there shall be night there no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and **they shall reign for ever and ever**.

Verse 3 says that God and the Lamb are on the throne. Then verse 5 says: "they shall reign for ever and ever." Most commentators seem to agree that “the servants of God and of the Lamb” are the ones who are said to "reign for ever and ever". But according to the syllogistic reasoning that I mentioned above, since Revelation says that God, the Lamb, and men of every nation are to be kings, therefore, God, the Lamb and the men of all nations are the same. That doesn't make any sense. Yet it really is true in some sense that God, Christ, and their servants rule for ever and ever. These passages in Revelation are probably references to Exodus 19:5-6 and Daniel 7. The author of Revelation knew that the one like a “son of man” was an individual

like the preceding beastly kings were[168]. But he knew that God's people were also predicted to be a kingdom in some sense.

My explanation above simply shows that the writer of the Apocalypse called God, the Lamb, and their servants "kings". And so something similar could have been meant in Daniel 7, namely, that Dan.7:18 and 27 foretell that God's servants would receive the kingdom, but that Dan. 7:14 foretells that the Son of Man, an individual, would receive it in a different sense, as the literal king. Jesus called himself the Son of Man. And Luke used the expression that way, too. If the Son of Man of Daniel really meant the nation of Israel, Luke would have made it clear. Ancient Jewish and Christian commentators who thought the Son of Man of Dan. 7:13 was the Messiah, the King of Israel, were correct, unlike numerous modern commentators.

## Daniel 11 and 12 May Not Be In Their Original Form.

Luke doesn't have anything to say about most of Daniel 11 and 12. That could be because Jesus didn't accept those chapters as they read now. The suggestion that some parts of Daniel are not authentic shouldn't be a complete surprise, since the issue came up even in antiquity. The longer version of Daniel preserved in the Greek Septuagint is still used by Orthodox Christians and Catholics. But Protestants and Jews use a shorter version of Daniel. The style of the book shows that the Book of Daniel was written by different people, and couldn't have been written by Daniel alone. Isaac Newton wrote[169]:

---

168 Rev. 1:13 describes "one like unto a son of man". Verse 16 says: "out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword:" Verses 17 and 18 say: "… Fear not: I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." Did the nation of Israel get resurrected? Did the nation of Israel have the keys of death and of Hades? Or was this not rather Jesus? Rev. 19:21 refers to a person who has a sword coming forth out of his mouth. In Rev. 19:13 he is called "The Word of God", and in verse 16 he is called "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS". The "one like unto the Son of man" in Rev. 1:13 is the person in Rev. 19 identified by the sword coming out of his mouth. So the author of Revelation thought the Son of Man was "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" and "The Word of God". He could not be the nation of Israel.

169 Page 10 of Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John

> The book of *Daniel* is a collection of papers written at several times. The six last chapters contain Prophecies written at several times by *Daniel* himself: the six first are a collection of historical papers written by others. The fourth chapter is a decree of *Nebuchadnezzar*. The first chapter was written after *Daniel's* death: for the author saith, that *Daniel* continued to the first year of *Cyrus*; that is, to his first year over the *Persians* and *Medes*, and third year over *Babylon*. And, for the same reason, the fifth and sixth chapters were also written after his death. For they end with these words: *So this* Daniel *prospered in the reign of* Darius, *and in the reign of* Cyrus *the* Persian. Yet these words might be added by the collector of the papers, whom I take to be *Ezra*.

Even if what Newton wrote above is mostly correct, Ezra might have made a mistake when he collected the papers. An inauthentic part left in a Bible book subjects the whole book to ridicule. For example Porphyry attacked the authenticity of the Book of Daniel because of evidence that the Story of Susanna was originally written in Greek. Nathaniel Lardner translated the following from the preface of Jerome's commentary on Daniel[170]:

> ' … And it may be proper for us, among other things, to observe now, that Porphyry argued, that the book of Daniel was not genuine, because it was written in Greek, and therefore certainly was not the work of any Jew, but the forgerie of some Greek writer. This he argued from some Greek words which are in the fable of Susanna: to which both Eusebius and Apollinarius returned the same answer: That the fabulous stories of Susanna, and Bel, and the Dragon, are not in the Hebrew, and are said to have been composed by a person of the tribe of Levi: whereas the sacred scripture assures us, that Daniel and the three children, his companions, were of the tribe of Judah. And they said, they were not accountable for what was not received by the Jews, nor was a part of the sacred scriptures … .'

Porphyry's attack on Susanna was not new. Greek-speaking Christians were aware of attacks on the deuterocanonical sections of Daniel and other books in the times of Africanus and Origen, a generation before Porphyry. Origen's letter to Africanus about

---

(London, 1733).

170 Lardner dates this attack A.D. 270 in the margin, on page 270.

the authenticity of the story of Susanna reveals that Jews scornfully laughed at Greek-speaking Christians who believed in the story, saying[171]:

> And I make it my endeavour not to be ignorant of their various readings, lest in my controversies with the Jews I should quote to them what is not found in their copies, and that I may make some use of what is found there, even although it should not be in our Scriptures. For if we are so prepared for them in our discussions, they will not, as is their manner, scornfully laugh at Gentile believers for their ignorance of the true reading as they have them.

The removal of the deuterocanonical sections of Daniel was hard for early Christians to accept. Book 2 of Rufinus's "Apology" contains a lengthy attack on Jerome for accepting only the sections of Daniel accepted by the Jews[172]:

> For instance, the whole of the history of Susanna, which gave a lesson of chastity to the churches of God, has by him been cut out, thrown aside and dismissed. The hymn of the three children, which is regularly sung on festivals in the Church of God, he has wholly erased from the place where it stood … . Peter was for twenty-four years Bishop of the Church of Rome. We cannot doubt that, amongst other things necessary for the instruction of the church, he himself delivered to them the treasury of the sacred books, which, no doubt, had even then begun to be read under his presidency and teaching. What are we to say then? Did Peter the Apostle of Christ deceive the church and deliver to them books which were false and contained nothing of truth?

---

171 At the end of section 5 (page 375). Perhaps written between 228 and 240 A.D. From "A Letter From Origen to Africanus", by Origen. Translated by Rev. Frederick Crombie. From a larger work, Ante-Nicene Christian Library. Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, editors. VOL. X. The Writings of Origen. Vol. I. (Edinburgh, 1895.) Digitized by Google.

172 Section 33, page 475 of "Rufinus's Apology. Book II.", by Tyrannius Rufinus of Aquileia. Translated by William Henry Freemantle. From a larger work, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of The Christian Church. Second Series. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, editors. Volume III. Theodoret, Jerome, Gennadius, Rufinus: Historical Writings, etc. 1892.

I already mentioned Isaac Newton's observation, that the Book of Daniel is a collection of writings. Despite Rufinus's arguments, Jesus didn't say anything about The History of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, or The Song of the Three Holy Children. Nor did Jesus refer to Daniel 11, which may be spurious like the deuterocanonical sections of Daniel. Chapter 11 seems more ambiguous than most other Bible prophecies[173] and needs — yet does not have — an angelic interpreter like other chapters of Daniel have. A few Bible scholars have expressed doubt about it for their own reasons. I don't think it is incumbent on a follower of Jesus to understand a prophecy that he didn't explain.

The Dead-Sea-Scrolls fragments of the Book of Daniel date back close to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and the Hasmoneans. These ancient fragments are close to the Hebrew and Aramaic text we have today. Daniel chapter 11 is not missing. So I take it that the text that we have today of the Book of Daniel is the same as the Pharisees had in Jesus's time.

The origin of that text is explained in 2 Macc. 2:13-15. If that report is true, Judas Maccabaeus preserved the Jewish Scriptures. It's not surprising that the Pharisees accepted his canon of Scripture in view of the fact that they honored him with the Feast of Dedication. The descendants of the Pharisees, Rabbinical Jews, likewise honor Judas with the Hanukkah holiday and use a Biblical canon received from Judas. But I say that Jesus didn't trust Judas Maccabaeus or the Pharisees, and he didn't accept their judgment concerning inspired Scripture.

Commentators who admire Porphyry, as well as those who admire Jerome, should consider the fact that the Book of Daniel that we have today was compiled from a collection of stories about Daniel, some authentic and some not. So it is not reasonable to think you have disproven the entire Book of Daniel by proving that there is something wrong with one or more chapters, whether it be, for example, the Story of Susanna or the 11th chapter of Daniel. If Daniel arose from the dead, he might deny having written that chapter. Something seems to be wrong with at least parts of the 11th and 12th chapters even in the Hebrew text.

---

173 Just as different people imagine different images in a cloud or in the moon, so also each individual can imagine his own fulfillment of the passages in Daniel 11. Most passages are vague and some are ungrammatical or ambiguous in Hebrew. William Hatley Frere believed that Daniel 11 described the history of Napoleon Bonaparte, verses 22-28 being in "minute detail of his campaign in Italy in the years 1796 and 1797".

Otto Zöckler thought that Daniel 11 didn't harmonize with the rest of the Bible. James Strong translated Zöckler's commentary on Daniel[174] into English, but didn't approve of his opinion. Charles Henry Hamilton Wright[175] thought that the 11th chapter of Daniel is not in its original form. Charles Boutflower approved of Wright's explanation[176]. My opinion is a little more extreme than the opinions of Zockler and Wright. I don't know the origin of Daniel 11, but I suspect that it never meant anything definite at all, but was designed for any prejudiced reader who was predisposed to read meaning into the prophecy. As a wild guess, it may be an oracle translated by a Jewish translator who thought that Greek oracles were sometimes inspired by the God of the Hebrew Scriptures.

## The Interpretation of Josephus.

The purpose of this chapter is to discredit Josephus's interpretations of 1 and 2 Maccabees. If Josephus had never said that the period of the desolation of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes fulfilled Daniel's prophecy, it is possible that later Christian and Jewish commentators would not have relied on 1 and 2 Macc. to interpret Daniel. Later commentators might have joined Jerome in acknowledging that 3 years does not equal 3½ years. Commentators, after being indoctrinated, have become insensitive to the contradiction between the 2- and 3-year periods in these books. And they have become obsessed with the impossible task of finding a 3-year period in Daniel.

Many commentators fit the period of the defilement of the temple to a 3½-year period they see in Daniel chapters 7, 8, and 12. There is no historical support for asserting that the period of defilement during Maccabean times was 1290 days, 3½ years, or 1335 days. But commentators quote certain statements by Josephus in *Wars*. In the preface of *Wars*, section 7, Josephus says:

> [FOR EXAMPLE, I shall relate] how Antiochus, who was named Epiphanes, took Jerusalem by force, and held it three years and three months, and was then ejected out of the country by the sons of Asamoneus … .

---

174 The Book of the Prophet Daniel: Theologically and Homiletically Expounded, by Otto Zöckler. James Strong, translator. (New York, 1899).

175 Pages 314-318 of Daniel and His Prophecies, by Charles H. H. Wright.

176 Page 5 of In and Around the Book of Daniel. (London, 1923.)

But despite what he said above, Josephus never went on to relate anything about that exact time period, 3 years and 3 months, in either *Wars* or *Antiquities*.

About a page after his comment about three years and three months, in *Wars* 1.1.1, Josephus says concerning Antiochus Epiphanes:

> He also spoiled the temple, and put a stop to the constant practice of offering a daily sacrifice of expiation for three years and six months.

Josephus seems to change 3 years and 3 months to 3 years and 6 months here. He doesn't explain why he did it, and both figures are wrong anyway. Josephus does not even say here that the action by Antiochus fulfilled a prophecy.

In *Wars* 5.9.4, Josephus says:

> For another example, when Antiochus, who was called Epiphanes, lay before this city, and had been guilty of many indignities against God, and our forefathers met him in arms, they then were slain in the battle, this city was plundered by our enemies, and our sanctuary made desolate for three years and six months.

But Josephus doesn't tell us that this was a fulfillment of prophecy or what his historical source was for 3½ years.

Josephus changes this time period again in *Antiquities*. Before quoting him in that book, I will quote William Whiston, who wrote about Josephus's varying figures for the profanation of the temple. Whiston wrote a list of 51 contradictions between *Wars* and *Antiquities*. This is contradiction number 4[177]:

> (4.) Thus in the first Book *Of the Jewish War, Prooeme, §* 7. and Book I. I. I. and V. 9. 4. *Josephus* thrice ascribes 3½ *years* to the profanation of the temple by *Antiochus Epiphanes:* while yet, in his *Antiquities*, X. II. 7. once and XII. 7. 6. *twice.* he honestly owns, that it was but 3 *years.* Which last we know to be true from the original historians, the authors of the two Books of

177 From page cxliii of "Dissertation Upon the Chronology of Josephus", numbered Dissertation IV in Volume 1 of the 1741 Dublin edition of The Genuine Works of Flavius Josephus the Jewish Historian. This same dissertation is numbered Dissertation V (page 970) in the J.S. Virtue 1849 edition of Josephus. The Virtue edition was edited and is easier to read.

the *Maccabees:* 1 *Mac*. i. 54, 59, with IV. 52, and 2 *Macc*. x. 3. 5.[178]. See the VI. Dissertations, pag. 131, 132.

Whiston says in a footnote on section 2 of the Preface to *Antiquities*:

> *Those books of the war were published about* A. D. 75, *and these Antiquities*, A. D. 93, *about eighteen years later.*

Whiston admitted that Josephus made many mistakes and essentially said to ignore *Wars* when it conflicts with *Antiquities* in the previously mentioned "Dissertation IV"[179]:

> … The foregoing 51 are the principal examples of such mistakes in *Josephus's* present copies, as seem to me generally to be his own real mistakes; and not owing to his transcribers or correctors: and the reader will readily observe, that they are chiefly confined to the two first Books of the *Jewish War*, belonging to elder times, and written when he was comparatively but a young man, under 38 years of age; when he had read comparatively but a few books, and those not always the most authentic; when in particular he appears never to have seen either the *first Book of Maccabees*, or the following *Chronicle of John Hyrcanus*, 1 Macc. xvi. 23. 24. both written in *Hebrew*, and both the authentick originals, whence he ought to have drawn the principal facts he was to relate: and which accordingly he closely followed, and carefully abridged, when, many years afterward, he wrote his *Antiquities*. As for the five Books of *Jason* of *Cyrene*, or their abridgement, the second book of *Maccabees*, which were written in *Greek;* he seems never to have seen them at all. To be sure he has made little or no use of them. Nor is the comparative inaccuracy of *Josephus's* history in these first parts of his writings to be denied. Nor was he himself afterward insensible of it; when, in his *Antiquities*, XII. 5. 2. he begins the history of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, with whose history his first book *Of the War* had also begun after this manner: "I will now relate distinctly," says *Josephus*,"what concerns this King; and how he seized upon *Judea,* and the temple. For when I formerly

---

178 Whiston forgot that Josephus had said 3 years and 3 months, not 6 months in the Preface. And he mistakenly says that 2 Macc. 10:3 says that the defilement of the temple was 3 years, instead of 2.

179 Page clii of the 1741 edition. Page 973 of the Virtue edition. From Dissertation V., “Upon the Chronology of Josephus”, section 34.

> wrote that history, I mention'd the facts only by way of epitome. Wherefore I think it necessary now to go over that history again, and this after an accurate manner." And greatly does it tend to the honour of *Josephus*, that he was so willing in his *latter* works to correct the errors of his *former;* as he appears frequently to have done: though his commentators do hardly ever take notice of it: but instead thereof frequently puzzle and perplex themselves, though generally to little purpose, in *reconciling* such passages in his following works to the parallel ones in his first: while they ought rather to have acknowledged them to be not seldom plainly *irreconcileable;* and to have taken particular notice of the latter passages as no other than honest *emendations* of the former. Nor is it any wonder at all, that the *Antiquities*, published as I said about 18 years after the Books of the *Jewish War;* and his account of his own *Life*, which was an appendix to them; together with two Books against *Apion;* which I think were written still later; should be more authentick, and more accurate than the earliest of all his writings the first and second Book of the *Jewish War*.

I will use Whiston's comments above as an excuse to ignore Josephus's contradictory time periods in *Wars of the Jews* and to look exclusively at *Antiquities of the Jews* to determine whether Josephus believed that Daniel prophesied the defilement of the temple during the times of Antiochus. Josephus writes in *Antiquities* 10.11.7:

> He also wrote and left behind him what made manifest the accuracy and undeniable veracity of his predictions; for he saith, That when he was in Susa, the metropolis of Persia, and went out into the field with his companions, there was, on the sudden, a motion and concussion of the earth, and that he was left alone by himself, his friends flying away from him, and that he was disturbed, and fell on his face, and on his two hands, and that a certain person touched him, and, at the same time bade him rise, and see what would befall his countrymen after many generations.

In the quotation above, Josephus is beginning to relate the vision of the ram and the he-goat in Daniel 8. But he inserts the encounter Daniel had with an angel from chapter 10, as if Dan. 10:7-11 belonged at the beginning of chapter 8. Josephus continues to summarize Daniel 8. I will eliminate some of the text since it is long:

> … and that God showed to him, that it should fight against his nation, and take their city by force, and bring the temple-worship to confusion, and forbid the sacrifices to be offered **for one thousand two hundred and ninety-six days**. Daniel wrote that he saw these visions in the plain of Susa; and he hath informed us that God interpreted the appearance of this vision after the following manner: … and that from among them there should arise a certain king that should overcome our nation and their laws, and should take away their political government, and should spoil the temple, and forbid the sacrifices to be offered **for three years' time**. And indeed so it came to pass, that our nation suffered these things under Antiochus Epiphanes, according to Daniel's vision, and what he wrote many years before they came to pass. In the very same manner Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made desolate by them.

Dan. 8:14 says 2300 days (or, "evenings and mornings"), not 1296 days, as Josephus said. I put that number in bold above. No ancient authority agrees with Josephus on his number. Suppose that Josephus had a more accurate copy of Daniel than the one preserved in the Masoretic text, and the text really should read 1296 days. Then he would be telling us that 1296 days is three years, which is yet another false statement. And if you substitute 2300 days for 1296, it still isn't true. Nor is it true if you divide 2300 evenings and mornings by two, and get 1150 days, as some have done. So Josephus's exposition of Daniel 8 does not "manifest the accuracy and undeniable veracity of [God's] predictions". It subjects the Book of Daniel to ridicule[180].

Josephus got most of *Antiquities* 12.7.6 from 1 Maccabees[181]. But he inserted his own interpretations, which I have put in bold below. Josephus said:

> …. Now it so fell out, that these things were done on the very same day on which their divine worship had fallen off, and was reduced to a profane and common use, **after three years' time;** for so it was, that the temple was made desolate by Antiochus, and so continued for **three years**. This desolation happened to the temple in the hundred forty and fifth year, on the twenty-fifth day of the month Apelleus, and on the hundred fifty-third olympiad: but it was dedicated anew, on the same day, the twenty-fifth of the

180 Josephus's careless use of numbers is reminiscent of Hippolytus's, who said that this time period was 1300 days, 2300 days, and 3 years and a half.

181 See 1 Macc. chapters 1 and 4.

month Apelleus, on the hundred and forty-eighth year, and on the hundred and fifty-fourth olympiad. **And this desolation came to pass according to the prophecy of Daniel, which was given four hundred and eight years before: for he declared that the Macedonians would dissolve that worship [for some time.]**

1 Maccabees doesn't actually say “three years”, but gives the month, day, and year of both the defilement and the cleansing of the temple. Josephus must have calculated the “three years” from 1 Macc. 1:54 (1:57 Douay) and 1 Macc. 4:59. It is impossible to determine his historical source in *Wars* for the duration of the desolation of the temple. But his source in *Antiquities* is clear. Namely, he found it in 1 Maccabees: three years to the day. And whereas he didn't provide a Biblical prophecy in *Wars* to connect with the time period of the desolation of the temple, Josephus has one now. He says that it was the prophecy with the ram and the he-goat, the 8th chapter of Daniel (not the 7th, 9th, 11th, or 12th chapter). Notice that Josephus did say that this was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Daniel, but he didn't quote a passage from Daniel about a three-year period. Josephus had said in *Wars* 5.9.4: "… our sanctuaries made desolate for three years and six months …". Apparently Josephus rejected 3½ years by the time he wrote *Antiquities*, changing it to 3 years, which he seems to have thought was 1296 days.

In summary, Josephus believed that the desolation of the temple at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes lasted exactly 3 years. He said that this three-year period (1296 days) was predicted in the prophecy in Daniel 8. Therefore, he didn't think that the desolation of this temple in the 2nd century B.C. had anything to do with the other time periods in Daniel: the "time and times and half a time" of Dan. 7:25 and Dan. 12:7, the 1290 days of Dan. 12:11, or the 1335 days of Dan. 12:12[182].

But since 1296 days is really more than three years, and since Josephus seems to have combined the 8th and 10th chapters of Daniel without authority, Josephus is so unreliable that he should have no influence on people studying the Book of Daniel.

Josephus's thinking about dates is illuminated by what he said in *Wars* 6.4.8 concerning the burning of the temple in Jerusalem. I will put part of it in bold type:

---

182 This means that none of the hundreds of commentators who accommodated the time periods of Daniel to the times of Antiochus Epiphanes have any historical support either from Josephus or from 1 and 2 Maccabees.

8. NOW, ALTHOUGH any one would justly lament the destruction of such a work as this was, since it was the most admirable of all the works that we have seen or heard of, both for its curious structure and its magnitude, and also for the vast wealth bestowed upon it, as well as for the glorious reputation it had for its holiness, — yet might such a one comfort himself with this thought, That **it was fate that decreed it so to be**, which is inevitable, both as to living creatures, and as to works and places also. However, **one cannot but wonder at the accuracy of this period thereto relating; for the same month and day were now observed as I said before, wherein the holy house was burnt formerly by the Babylonians**[183]. Now the number of years that passed from its first foundation, which was laid by king Solomon, till this destruction, which happened in the second year of the reign of Vespasian, are collected to be one thousand one hundred and thirty, besides seven months and fifteen days; and from the second building of it, which was done by Haggai, in the second year of Cyrus the king, till its destruction under Vespasian, there were six hundred and thirty-nine years and forty-five days.

Josephus didn't say that a prophet had predicted that the temple would be burned on the same date by the Romans on which was previously burned by the Babylonians. He said that fate had decreed it, and that one could not but wonder at it. The authors of 1 and 2 Macc. likewise could not but wonder at the coincidence of dates. But even though they knew that it didn't fit the 2300 evenings and mornings of Daniel 8, they thought that surely Divine Providence was behind the coincidence. Josephus says more about Providence in *Antiquities* 10.11.7, and I will put part of it in bold type:

… the Epicureans are in an error, who cast providence out of human life, and do not believe that God takes care of the affairs of the world, nor that the universe is governed and continued in being by that blessed and immortal nature, but say that the world is carried along of its own accord, without a ruler and a curator; which, were it destitute of a guide to conduct, as they imagine, it would be like ships without pilots, which we see drowned by the

183 Josephus said in Wars 6:4:5: "but, as for that house, God had, for certain, long ago doomed it to the fire; and now that fatal day was come, according to the revolution of ages; it was the tenth day of the month Lous [Ab], upon which it was formerly burnt by the king of Babylon;" Jer. 52:12-13; 2 Kings 25:8-9.

winds, or like chariots without drivers, which are overturned; so would the world be dashed to pieces by its being carried without a Providence, and so perish and come to nought. **So that, by the forementioned predictions of Daniel, those men seem to me very much to err from the truth, who determine, that God exercises no providence over human affairs; for if that were the case, that the world went on by mechanical necessity, we should not see that all things would come to pass according to his prophecy.**

First and Second Maccabees were inconsistent between each other, and Josephus was inconsistent with himself, about the time period that the temple was desolate. They probably didn't think that the number of years was important. They thought that coincidences of dates were proof that God had restored the temple. In a quotation above, Josephus calculated periods of 1130 years plus 7 months and 15 days, and also a period of 639 years and 45 days. He didn't say that a prophecy predicted those exact periods of time. The authors of 1 and 2 Maccabees did not believe that Daniel had predicted the time period under discussion. Because of his confused and contradictory statements, it's hard to be sure exactly what Josephus thought. It is surprising that Josephus was so confused about the time period of the desolation of the temple because he had presumably heard the services at the Festival of Dedication numerous times. As a priest he shouldn't have misquoted the Book of Daniel so badly.

## The Abomination of Desolation Is Not a Person Called Antichrist.

The Gospel of Luke refers to the Book of Daniel. Because Paul and the author of 1 and 2 John seem to have taught about the Antichrist, a doctrine that is associated with Daniel, I need to comment on this subject, even though Luke never suggested such a doctrine.

There was an ancient Jewish interpretation of an Antichrist. They conceived of the Antichrist as an individual, as Hippolytus also did, but not like the antichrists (in the plural) of 1 and 2 John. Jerome wrote in his commentary on Daniel 11:36:

> From this place onwards, the Jews think that Anti-Christ is spoken of, that, after the *little help* of Julian, a king shall arise who shall do according to his own will, and lift himself up against all which is called god, and speak great things against the God of gods, so that he shall sit in the temple of God, and make himself god, and his will be performed, until the wrath of God be fulfilled for in him shall the end be. Which we too understand of Anti-Christ[184].

That interpretation was based on Daniel 11:36 and surrounding verses. If the Jewish interpretation described by Jerome dated back to the first century, Paul may have known it. Luke reveals in Acts 22:1-3 that Paul spoke Hebrew[185] and was brought up "… in this city,[186]at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God …".

E. B. Pusey further explained the individual Antichrist doctrine as follows[187]:

> We, Christians, look for an Anti-Christ yet to come. Our Lord forewarned of him and his deceivableness[1]. S. Paul describes such an one as Daniel speaks of[2]. Isaiah had before foretold of him and his destruction[3]. This is *now*, thus far, a question of interpretation only. Why should we not suppose Daniel to have meant what our Lord and His Apostles meant?

First of all, in answer to Pusey, our Lord knew exactly what Daniel meant. And Luke knew what the Lord meant. Pusey's footnote #1 above cites Matt. 24:24. Pusey speaks of the Antichrist as an individual, in the singular. So it doesn't make any sense for Pusey to cite a passage about false prophets and false christs (in the plural) to represent an individual and unique Antichrist. The false prophets in Matt. 24:24 are probably the same as those in Matt. 24:11. False messiahs (similar to Judas Maccabaeus) arose in the first century between Jesus's death and the destruction of Jerusalem. False prophets probably arose in Jerusalem during the war with the Romans just as false prophets arose in Jerusalem to contradict Jeremiah. Pusey's footnote #3 cites Isaiah 14:13-14, which passage is about the king of Babylon, not about the Antichrist. See Isaiah 14:4.

---

184 Translated by Pusey. On page 96 of the 1864 edition.

185 Acts 21:40.

186 He was in Jerusalem (Acts 21:31).

187 Pages 89-90. Daniel the Prophet Nine Lectures Delivered in the Divinity School of The University of Oxford, With Copious Notes, by E.B. Pusey (London and Oxford, 1864)

Even though there is no merit whatsoever in Pusey's citations of Matt. 24:24 and Isaiah 14 to prove a Biblical Antichrist doctrine, Pusey has a point with his reference to 2 Thess. 2:3-4 (Pusey's footnote #2). Pusey thought that Paul was alluding to chapters 7 and 11 of the Book of Daniel. I think that the expression "man of sin" or "man of lawlessness" (some translations) is an incorrect interpretation of the abomination of desolation in Matt. 24:15, and that Paul thought that the abomination of desolation was the person described in Daniel 11:36 and Daniel 7:8 and 25[188]. The eschatology of 2 Thess. is based primarily on Matthew 24. The coming of the Son of Man and the gathering of the faithful by angels is referred to in Matt. 24:27-28 and 31 and in 2 Thess. 2:1. The Thessalonians were eager to know when Jesus was going to return, the same way as the apostles who heard Jesus's so-called “last-days” speech (2 Thess. 2:2; Matt. 24:2-4). Like the apostles, the Thessalonians were vulnerable to being deceived (2 Thess. 2:3; Matt. 24:4-5, 10-11, 24). Somebody or something was predicted to be in the holy place before Jesus's return (2 Thess. 2:4; Matt. 24:15; but not "where it ought not" as in Mark 13:14). After that, the wicked were to be destroyed and the righteous saved (2 Thess. 2:1, 8; Matt. 24:30-31). The "man of sin" ("man of lawlessness" in some translations) does not appear in Matt. 24. This is surprising since other passages in 2 Thess. match Matthew 24. It is also surprising that the abomination of desolation in Matt. 24 is not mentioned in 2 Thessalonians. The reason for this is probably that Paul and many other early Christians misinterpreted the abomination of desolation. So Paul was telling the Thessalonians that the Lord Jesus (the Son of Man) wouldn't come to deliver them until the abomination of desolation stood in the holy place. But Paul substituted his incorrect interpretation, namely, a "man of sin" sitting in the temple, instead of quoting the original metaphorical words of Jesus about the abomination of desolation, which words the Thessalonians wouldn't understand. He was doing something similar to Luke, who later substituted plainer language in Luke 21:20-24 for the obscure language in Daniel that Jesus actually used in his speech. It isn't necessary to figure out exactly what Paul meant by the

---

188 Hippolytus called the beast in Revelation 11 "antichrist". The abomination of desolation of Daniel 9 was the fourth beast in Daniel 7, but Luke explains that it meant the Roman armies destined to destroy Jerusalem, not an individual destined to persecute Christians. See the chapter on Hippolytus in this book. Some English translators of Mark 13:14 say the abomination of desolation stands "where he ought not", but others "where it ought not". Evidently, the Greek text leaves ambiguity that the English language doesn't tolerate, so the translator has to decide whether the abomination is a "he" or an "it".

expression "man of sin", since Paul would have abandoned his mistaken interpretation after Luke wrote his gospel. I suspect that Paul learned the Antichrist interpretation at the feet of Gamaliel. The research described in Luke 1:1-4 led to the correction of the gospels that Luke and Paul had previously used. Luke's gospel didn't exist when Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians. Based on the last-days ideas of 2 Thessalonians, the gospel that Paul used must have been Matthew. The resurrected Jesus really did speak to Paul as described in Acts 9. But he didn't give him a gospel. Paul had to learn from imperfect people and imperfect books.

Maybe Pusey correctly interpreted the meaning of 2 Thess. 2, and maybe Paul really considered the expression "the Antichrist" as a synonym for "the man of sin" when he wrote 2 Thessalonians. If so, then Pusey was right that Paul once mistakenly believed in the doctrine of the individual Antichrist. I quoted evidence elsewhere in this book that the wording of the Greek gospels of Matthew and of Mark allows for the mistaken interpretation that the abomination of desolation is a man. But Paul no longer believed that doctrine at least by the time of the publication of Luke's gospel. There is no sense in reconciling irreconcilable statements in the Bible. God didn't create the biblical canon. And canonical books can have mistakes.

Pusey continues on page 90:

> Certainly Daniel himself makes a difference between the God-opposed power symbolised in the little horn of the 8th chapter and that in the 7th. For the opposition to God in the eighth is manifestly the persecution by Antiochus Epiphanes, and ends simply in the death of the individual and the cleansing of the visible sanctuary. In speaking of the great God-opposed power, in which the Fourth Empire should centre, he speaks of a shaking of the world's powers, such as the world has not yet seen. What he speaks of in plain reference to Antiochus Epiphanes, had its exact fulfilment in him. Had he meant that other description for him, it would have accorded also. The opponents of Daniel can find no escape from this, through assertions that the prophecy did not correspond with the event. For their hypothesis is, that Daniel is describing *past* events.

From here through page 96 (of the 1864 version) of Daniel the Prophet, Pusey thinks that he is proving that, whereas the God-opposed power in Daniel 8 is Antiochus Epiphanes, the God-opposed power described in similar terms in Daniel 7 and 11 is not. And Pusey's logic is that if the individual in Daniel 7 and 11 is not

Antiochus, **the only alternative is Antichrist**. Both Pusey and his opponents believed in the Maccabean theory. I will put some words in bold in the quotation below in Jerome's comment on Daniel 11:21-24, where he shows how the early church fathers read the Antichrist doctrine into Daniel[189]:

> Such is the order of the history: nor is there here any difference between Porphyry and our people. The rest, which follows to the end of the volume, he interprets of Antiochus Epiphanes, brother of Seleucus, son of Antiochus the Great, who after Seleucus reigned eleven years in Syria, who subdued Judea: in whose time happened the persecution of the Jewish laws, and the wars of the Maccabees. **Our people suppose, that all these things are prophetical of Antichrist, who will appear in the last days of the world. As many things in the following part of this book agree to Antiochus, they say, he was a type of Antichrist; and that those things which were partly verified in him, will be more fully accomplished in Antichrist.** This … is the manner of scripture, which beforehand represents in types what will be more completely fulfilled afterwards.

The idea that Antiochus Epiphanes pertains to the Book of Daniel comes from 1 and 2 Maccabees, which books have nothing to do with Daniel, as I have said previously. Pusey quotes Josephus, but I show in this book that Josephus is utterly unreliable for interpreting Daniel. And the idea of Jerome, other early Christians, and Pusey that Antiochus was a type of Antichrist, and that whatever scripture does not apply to Antiochus applies to the Antichrist alone, is likewise without foundation. Neither Jesus nor Luke referred either to Antiochus or to an individual called the Antichrist.

Jesus doesn't seem to have referred to the 11th chapter of Daniel. C. H. H. Wright[190] and some other scholars thought that the 11th chapter of Daniel, as it reads today, is not authentic.

1 John 2:18 and 22, 1 John 4:3, and 2 John 1:7 use the word "antichrist". The word properly belongs to these passages, not to any other passages of the Christian Scriptures. 1 John 2:18 speaks of "antichrists" in the plural in connection with

189 Translated by Nathaniel Lardner. James Hatley Frere thought that Porphyry had too much influence on Jerome, and that Jerome had too much influence on the church fathers who followed him. It was very clear to Frere that some of the verses of Daniel 11 were about Napoleon.

190 Daniel and His Prophecies, by Charles H. H. Wright (London 1906).

defection from the Christian faith, the failure to confess Jesus. Christian confession under pressure is a subject that Jesus really did speak about (Luke 12:8-12). I don't understand the Epistles of John well, but even when "antichrist" is used in the singular in these epistles, the word seems to be about apostasy from Christianity, not an evil individual who was prophesied to come.

An earlier chapter in this book was about Mark 13:14 and Matthew 24:15-16. The ambiguity of the actual words of Jesus in those verses allowed first-century Christians to imagine that Jesus was talking about an existing Jewish Antichrist doctrine. And that may be why Luke replaced the actual words of Jesus with their meaning in Luke 21.

## Hippolytus's Confused Eschatology.

Hippolytus, an early Christian writer (died about 236 A.D.) believed that time prophecies of the Book of Daniel were explained in 1 and 2 Maccabees. Here is an English translation of some of his interpretations (by S. D. F. Salmond in the Ante-Nicene Fathers series)[191]:

> 10. For Antiochus arose, surnamed Epiphanes, who was of the line of Alexander. And after he had reigned in Syria, and brought under him all Egypt, he went up to Jerusalem, and entered the sanctuary, and seized all the treasures in the house of the Lord, and the golden candlestick, and the table, and the altar, and made a great slaughter in the land; even as it is written: "And the sanctuary shall be trodden under foot, unto evening and unto morning, a thousand and three hundred days." For it happened that the sanctuary remained desolate during that period, three years and a half, that the thousand and three hundred days might be fulfilled; until Judas Maccabaeus arose after the death of his father Matthias, and withstood him, and destroyed the encampment of Antiochus, and delivered the city, and recovered the sanctuary, and restored it in strict accordance with the law. 11.

191 "Hippolytus"; translated by Rev. S. D. F. Salmond; from a larger work, The Ante-Nicene Fathers Translations of the Fathers down to A.D. 325. Editors: Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson; American Reprint of the Edinburgh Edition. Volume V. Hippolytus, Cyprian, Caius, Novatian, Appendix.; Authorized Edition (Buffalo, 1886).

> Since, then, the angel Gabriel also recounted these things to the prophet, as they have been understood by us, as they have also taken place, and as they have been all clearly described in the books of the Maccabees, let us see further what he says on the other weeks[192].

In the quotation above, Hippolytus somehow got 1300 days from Daniel 8:14 (instead of 2300 evenings and mornings). Despite what Hippolytus said above, the sanctuary did not remain desolate for either 1300 days or 3½ years. Even though Hippolytus never tells the reader, 1 and 2 Macc. say that the temple remained desolate for either 3 years to the day or 2 years to the day, depending on which book you read. Despite what Hippolytus says, Gabriel did not say anything about 1300 days or about Antiochus Epiphanes, and these things were not "clearly described in the books of the Maccabees". His explanation may descend from Josephus, who had previously unconvincingly stated that the desolation of the temple by Antiochus was foretold in Daniel 8, and lasted 1296 days.

Hippolytus's above interpretation subjects Christianity to reproach. I have shown elsewhere that 1 and 2 Macc. have nothing to do with Daniel. Also, Jesus didn't approve of time prophecies.

Hippolytus explained chapter 11 of Daniel with Maccabean interpretations[193]:

> 35. And after these things Antiochus went forth a second time to make war against him, and overcome Ptolemy. And after these events Antiochus commenced hostilities again against the children of Israel, and despatched one Nicanor with a large army to subdue the Jews, at the time when Judas, after the death of Matthias, ruled the people; and so forth, as is written in the Maccabees. These events having taken place, the Scripture says again: "And there shall stand up another king, and he shall prevail upon the earth; and the king of the South shall stand up, and he shall obtain his daughter to stand up, and he shall obtain his daughter to wife."

Hippolytus thought that the wild beast of Revelation 11 was the Antichrist. He says in § 39:

---

192 Sections 10 and 11 on page 180.

193 Page 183. See 1 Macc. 7. Hippolytus was giving interpretations of the king of the south and the king of the north in this § 35 and also in the sections before and after.

> Thus, then, does the prophet set forth these things concerning the Antichrist, who shall be shameless, a war-maker, and despot, who, exalting himself above all kings and above every god, shall build the city of Jerusalem, and restore the sanctuary. Him the impious will worship as God, and will bend to him the knee, thinking him to be the Christ. He shall cut off the two witnesses and forerunners of Christ, who proclaim His glorious kingdom from heaven, as it is said: "And I will give (power) unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." As also it was announced to Daniel: "And one week shall confirm a covenant with many; and in the midst of the week it shall be that the sacrifice and oblation shall be removed" — that the one week might be shown to be divided into two. The two witnesses, then, shall preach three years and a half; and Antichrist shall make war upon the saints during the rest of the week, and desolate the world, that what is written may be fulfilled: "And they shall make the abomination of desolation for a thousand two hundred and ninety days."

Hippolytus further subjects Christianity to reproach by the passage above. He begins the quotation above referring to Dan. 11:36[194]. But Jesus never referred to that verse. Hippolytus wrongly appropriates the word "antichrist" from 1 and 2 John. He interprets time prophecies, even though Jesus never did[195]. And he seems to say that the abomination of desolation is the desolation of the world, not Roman armies.

Hippolytus's Antichrist resembles the Antichrist of Jewish doctrine (as described by Jerome) in that he is an individual. Hippolytus says in the quotation above that "Antichrist" would "be shameless, a war-maker, and despot". The "man of sin" in 2 Thess. 2:3-4 is also similar to Hippolytus's Antichrist. Another possible influence is that the Jews who celebrated the Feast of Dedication in pre-Christian times, even before Josephus, might have heard Maccabean interpretations of Daniel, not just stories about the Maccabean martyrs. Luke doesn't speak of an individual called "the Antichrist" or "the man of sin".

---

194 Frere said that Dan. 11:36 refers to Napoleon the Great. Page 14 of *Three Letters*.

195 Frere said that the 1290 days of Daniel 12:11 ended in 1823 (soon after the death of Napoleon). It was the "period of 1290 years from the authorized establishment of the Papacy" (page 29 in one edition). He said that "the abomination that maketh desolate" referred to "the idolatrous Papal religion in France" (page 40).

The author of Revelation expected his book to be fulfilled in the 1st century[196]. Rev. 11 alludes to Dan. 7 and 9. Luke 21:20-24 had already explained that the siege and destruction of Jerusalem and the temple fulfilled Dan. 7 and 9. But Hippolytus thought that these verses were yet to be fulfilled.

I have said from time to time that some interpretations that are opposed to Luke's are reasonable. For example, I said elsewhere that the "man of sin" doctrine in 2 Thess. 2 probably arose among Christians as an understandable misinterpretation of the "abomination of desolation" of Matthew 24:15. That is because Matt. 24:15 and Mark 13:14 could grammatically refer to a man. Also, it is Scriptural to interpret the beast of Daniel 7 as a king, and therefore as a man. Luke's gospel is a book of interpretation, and his interpretations are always Scripturally reasonable. I accept his interpretations and reject the others.

## Neither History Nor Daniel 11 Is Clear.

People won't give Luke's interpretations a hearing ear if they think that the Book of Daniel has been proven to mean something else. I mentioned that Porphyry claimed to have interpreted Daniel by using histories, most of which are now lost. Jerome accepted Porphyry's idea that the Book of Daniel clearly matched ancient history.

I mentioned that Anthony Collins wrote about Daniel's clear history. Samuel Chandler refuted his book, saying[197]:

> What he adds, that the *whole book* is written in a *particular style,* ***a dark emblematical, symbolical, parabolical, and figurative style***, will appear very odd to any one who looks to the page before; where he tells us, that the author of the book of *Daniel* hath ***most clearly spoken*** of the miserable times of the Jews, and their prodigious misfortunes under *Antiochus Epiphanes*, and of the good times which were to follow on his death; and again, *p.* 151. ***Divers matters of fact are spoken of in the book of*** **Daniel**

196 For overwhelming evidence of that, read one of the editions of Apocalypse Fulfilled written by Philip S. Desprez between 1854 and 1861. Desprez made numerous mistakes, but he really did prove the expected time of fulfillment of Revelation.

197 Pages 56-7. A Vindication of the Antiquity and Authority of Daniel's Prophecies, etc., by Samuel Chandler (London, 1728).

> ***in the way of prophecy, with the clearness of history, from* Daniel's *time to the times of* Antiochus Epiphanes.** Strange book this of *Daniel's*, the whole of which is written in a dark style, and part of which is written, nevertheless, with the clearness of history. All the world must allow the great acuteness of our author, who can make the same book all dark and partly clear; and that can argue, both from the darkness and clearness of it, against its authority and antiquity.

I kept the original italics, but added bold type to the quotation above, in which quotation Chandler makes fun of Collins for alternately saying that the Book of Daniel is "clear" and "not clear". We aren't sure what happened in the past. Commentators are sometimes just guessing because of Daniel's "dark style" and the unclearness of history. Most commentators say that the four horns of Daniel 8:8 and 22 and the broken kingdom of Daniel 11:4 refer to the division of Alexander's kingdom to four successors. But Josephus says that there were many successors in *Antiquities* 12:1.1, naming five of them:

> NOW WHEN Alexander, king of Macedon, had put an end to the dominion of the Persians, and had settled the affairs in Judea after the fore-mentioned manner, he ended his life: and as his government fell among many, **Antigonus** obtained Asia, **Seleucus**, Babylon; and of the other nations which were there, **Lysimachus** governed the Hellespont, and **Cassander** possessed Macedonia; as did **Ptolemy**, the son of Lagus, seize upon Egypt:

Whereas commentators often rely on Josephus as an authority for interpreting Daniel, few if any say that there were actually five successors. Nearly all say four.

Jerome, in his commentary on Daniel, identifies the four heads of the leopard of Daniel 7:6 as the four successors of Alexander, namely, **Ptolemy, Seleucus, Philip, and Antigonus**[198]. Jerome identifies the four horns of the goat in Daniel 8:8 as the same successors of Alexander[199]: He identifies the four parts of the broken kingdom in

---

198 *Quatuor autem capita eosdem dicit duces ejus, qui postea successores regni exstiterunt, Ptolomaeum, Seleucum, Philippum, Antigonum.*

199 *Aegyptum enim Ptolomaeus Lagi filius tenuit: Macedonas Philippus, qui & Arideus frater Alexandri: Syriam, & Babylonem, & omnia regna Orientis, Seleucus Nicanor: Asiae regnavit Antigonus.*

Dan. 11:3-4 as the kingdoms under the same four successors. But Jerome doesn't mention any argument from either Josephus or Porphyry about the identifications.

Ephraem the Syrian said that the four successors were **Seleucus, Demetrius, Philip, and Ptolemy**. Hippolytus said that Alexander divided his kingdom into four principalities without giving names. Samuel Davidson wrote, concerning the ten horns of the fourth beast:

> The number ten denotes the ten parts into which Alexander's empire was divided, and is not a round number.[200]

Nobody follows Josephus and names five successors, because the leopard in chapter 7 didn't have five heads and wings, and the goat in chapter 8 didn't have five horns, and the kingdom wasn't divided towards the five winds of heaven in chapter 11. And all the commentators are determined to harmonize history with the prophecy.

Neither the history nor the commentators are clear. Were there only four successors of Alexander? Or five, as Josephus said? Or ten, as Davidson and the Sibylline oracles said? Who were they? I don't know. But since Jesus didn't comment on this, I don't care.

The accurate histories that would be necessary to compare with the Book of Daniel no longer exist. Thus Thomas Rawson Birks wrote:

> The sole difficulty in tracing any part of this remarkable prediction, arises from the loss of many ancient histories, so that the fragments which remain are very imperfect, and each author only illustrates a part of the whole series. Thus Jerome observes, — 'To understand the last parts of Daniel, many histories of the Greeks are necessary, namely, those of Sutorius, Callinicus, Diodorus, Hieronymus, Polybius, Posidonius, Claudius, and Andronicus Alypius, whom also Porphyry professes to have followed; that of Josephus also, and those whom Josephus names, and especially of our own Livy, Pompeius Trogus, and Justin, who relate the whole history of this latest portion.'[201]

---

200 Page 210 of "The Book of Daniel" in Introduction to the Old Testament, Vol. 3 (1863). Even though Davidson said that Alexander's empire was divided into 10 parts, he said on page 161 that the four horns "are the four kingdoms which arose out of Alexander's". He harmonizes the difference between the 10 heads in Dan. 7 and the 4 horns in Dan. 8 on page 212, saying, "One and the same thing is looked at in various points of view, …".

201 Page 146. The Two Later Visions of Daniel: Historically Explained, by Thomas Rawson

## Porphyry's Interpretation.

Christian interpretations of Daniel needed reform before Porphyry. The postbiblical Christian interpretations that have survived ignore the Gospel of Luke. Those extant interpretations all took wrong paths, having been misled by the Books of the Maccabees, by Porphyry, by Josephus, by Jewish tradition, and by the early-church writers. They interpreted the abomination of desolation as an idol instead of an army, taught an Antichrist doctrine that Jesus didn't teach, and expected the return of the Son of Man as a future event instead of a first-century event. Porphyry's incorrect explanation of Daniel competed with then-existing, incorrect Christian interpretations. If nobody paid any attention to Porphyry today, I wouldn't include this chapter. But some scholars have praised him. And I am trying to discredit all the sources that conflict with Luke's interpretation of Daniel.

Hippolytus, who died about 236 C.E., used Maccabean interpretations in his commentary on Daniel before Porphyry. Lardner dated Porphyry's attack on the Book of Daniel about 270 CE. So Porphyry was not the first to interpret Daniel based on events during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.

At a time when Porphyry was becoming popular among some intellectuals in England, Rowland Williams wrote in his introduction to a commentary on Daniel[202]:

> When Porphyry read this collection of stories, he fairly argued, that it must have been written in Greek, since the first tale of Susannah contains two Greek puns (*σχινον* and *σχισει, πρινον* and *πρισαι*). His argument is adopted by our orthodox apologists, as a reason to the Church of Rome for our not accepting the Apocrypha.

Williams should have written: “Julius Africanus's argument [not Porphyry's] is adopted by our orthodox apologists … .” An article on Julius Africanus[203] dated the

---

Birks (London, 1846).

202 Page xxv of the book entitled Daniel; or, The Apocalypse of the Old Testament, by Philip S. Desprez (London and Edinburgh, 1865.)

203 Under the entry AFRICANUS, JULIUS. From the book A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrines, etc., edited by William Smith and Henry Wace. Volume 1 A-D (Boston, 1877).

correspondence between Origen and Africanus to AD 238. Origen and Africanus had discussed the Greek play on words in the Story of Susanna, which is in the Septuagint of the Book of Daniel. So Porphyry doesn't deserve the credit for the observation that the story of Susanna was originally written in Greek, not Hebrew. It seems likely to me that bilingual Jews detected the Greek origin of the Story of Susanna soon after the publication of the first Greek version, long before the times of Africanus, Origen, and Porphyry.

Porphyry might have originated the argument that the entire book of Daniel was therefore forged in Greek[204], guided by the wrong assumption that the rest of the book was inseparable from the additions to Daniel. But that argument was defeated in ancient times. It is surprising that Rowland Williams wondered if Porphyry was right about this:

> Hence it is an open, though neglected, question, whether the Greek be not, after all, the original of Daniel; … .

Commentators on Daniel after Rowland Williams have considered the question closed, not open as Williams said. Commentaries are based on the Hebrew text, not on the Greek Daniel.

Many people paraphrase Porphyry's thesis about Daniel, and some praise him by name, but few consistently imitate his specific interpretations. People who praise him should at least know what his arguments were. I will list some of his interpretations in this chapter.

Rowland Williams believed Porphyry's premise that the Book of Daniel records accurate history, so he wrote on page xx of the Introduction to Desprez's commentary on Daniel:

> Expositors so unlike as Porphyry and Jerome agree so nearly as this: the one supposes Daniel to describe Antiochus; the other prefers Antichrist under the type of Antiochus; in either view, a knowledge of Antiochus is presupposed.

---

204 From the Prologue of Jerome's commentary on Daniel: "Sed & hoc nosse debemus inter caetera, Porphyrium de Danielis libro nobis obiicere, idcirco illum apparere confictum, nec haberi apud Hebraeos, sed Graeci sermonis esse commentum, quia in Susannae fabula contineatur, dicente Daniele ad presbyteros, *απο του σχινου σχισαι, και απο του πρινου πρισαι*, quam etymologiam magis Graeco sermoni convenire, quam Hebraeo."

Their agreement doesn't mean that they were right. They agreed about Antiochus because both used the same wrong method, using the Books of the Maccabees to interpret Daniel.

**Porphyry's Thesis.** Jerome had written in the prologue of his commentary on Daniel:

> Contra prophetam Danielem duodecimum librum scripsit Porphyrius, nolens eum ab ipso, cujus inscriptus est nomine, esse compositum: sed a quodam qui temporibus Antiochi qui appellatus est Epiphanes, fuerit in Iudaea, et non tam Danielem ventura dixisse, quam illum narrasse praeterita. Denique quidquid usque ad Antiochum dixerit, veram historiam continere: si quid autem ultra opinatus sit, quia futura nescierit, esse mentitum.

Which I translate as follows:

> Porphyry wrote [his] twelfth book against the prophet Daniel, denying that it was composed by the same [one] with whose name it was inscribed, but by somebody who was in Judea during the times of the Antiochus who was called Epiphanes. And [Porphyry said that] Daniel did not say things to come as much as he narrated things past. Finally, [Porphyry said that] whatever he said up to Antiochus contains true history, but if he conjectured anything beyond [then], [he] spoke falsely, since he did not know [things that were] future.

Jerome had written in his commentary on Daniel 11:44-45:

> Et dicit eum qui sub nomine Danielis scripsit librum, ad refocillandam spem suorum fuisse mentitum. Non quo omnem historiam futuram nosse potuerit, sed quo jam facta memoraret, … .

Which I translate:

> And he says that he who wrote the book under the name of Daniel, lied in order to revive the hope of his own [people]. Not that he was able to know all future history, but that he related [things that were] already done.

Many writers interpret the words in the prologue of Jerome's commentary to mean that the author of Daniel not only faked history as prophecy sometimes, but that he also sometimes made real prophecies which were not fulfilled. But Jerome never

gives an instance where Porphyry says that the author of Daniel made a wrong prediction. And Jerome's comment at the end of Daniel 11, which I translated above, says that Porphyry said that the author of Daniel wrote past events, not suggesting that he made wrong prophecies. Jerome wrote that after reviewing some of Porphyry's worst interpretations, concerning Apedno, Saba, Maozim, and the war against Egypt in the 11th year of Antiochus. It would have benefited Porphyry to claim that the end of Daniel 11 was a forged, unfulfilled prophecy. But Porphyry tried to match historical events with prophecies in Daniel here even when he couldn't cite a historian. It is sometimes clear that he was making things up.

The majority of commentators who accept Porphyry's thesis seem to reject his explanations beginning with Daniel 11:40. Since they know that Daniel 11:40-45 had no fulfillment, they say that the 2nd-century B.C. writer of Daniel wrote his book after the events of Dan. 11:39, but before the events beginning with verse 40. That would account for the failure of his prophecy. So why did Porphyry make up a fulfillment of Daniel 11:40-45 instead of just blaming the non-fulfillment on the fake Daniel? Porphyry's fabrications here call everything he wrote into question.

Albert Barnes and Philip Desprez acknowledged that the events in Daniel 11:40-45 appeared to be an unfulfilled prophecy. But they made common excuses for those verses.

Thomas Newton wrote, commenting on Dan. 11:40:[205]

> But here Porphyry may be convicted of falsifying history; for after Antiochus was dismissed out of Egypt by the Romans, he never ventured to go thither again. The eleventh was the last year of his reign: and all historians agree, that the latter part of his reign was employed in his eastern expedition, in reducing Artaxias king of Armenia to his obedience, and in collecting the tribute among the Persians; and before he returned he died.

After quoting Newton, Samuel Sparkes wrote[206]:

---

205 Page 188. Dissertations on the Prophecies, etc., in Three Volumes, Volume the Second. 2nd edition. (1760)

206 Page 224. A Historical Commentary on the Eleventh Chapter of Daniel, etc., by Rev. Samuel Sparkes (Binghampton, 1858).

> … Surely, if Antiochus had entered Egypt and laid waste the countries, as the power here described in verses 40, 42, 43, is represented to have done; strange that no vestige of these events is found in the history of these times!

Bevan wrote something similar in his commentary [1892][207]:

> If the above reasoning be valid, these three chapters must have been composed before the death of Antiochus. Indeed it appears well-nigh certain that they were composed more than a year before his death, for they mention neither the great victories of Judas Maccabaeus nor the recovery and reconsecration of the Temple. The deliverance predicted in chap. xii. 1-3 is not to be brought about by human valour or policy but is of a wholly supernatural kind. It is therefore legitimate to conclude that the book of Daniel was finished at the time when the armed opposition of the Jews to Antiochus was in its earliest stage, and had as yet met with little success (chap. xi. 34).

Bevan was saying that chapters 10-12 of Daniel were written before Antiochus's death, and that the author of Daniel failed to mention certain notable events of Maccabean times. So even though Bevan accepted Porphyry's thesis (that Daniel was written by an unknown Jew in the 2nd century B.C. pretending to be the real Daniel in exile hundreds of years before), he didn't accept any of Porphyry's interpretations after Dan. 11:34.

**Despite statements to the contrary, commentators have never been convinced to agree with Porphyry because of independent investigations.** Desprez's book on Daniel contains several statements of Porphyry's thesis. These may have seemed to some readers to be independent conclusions by different scholars who compared Daniel's prophecies with history. But those authors knew the contents of Jerome's commentary on Daniel, and they simply restated Porphyry's theory in their own words, and without attribution.

In his book on Daniel that I mentioned before, Philip Desprez included this quotation from Thomas Arnold in a footnote on page 4:

> ”I have long thought that the greater part of the book of Daniel is most certainly a very late work of the time of Maccabees, and the pretended prophecy about the kings of Greece and Persia, and of the North and South, mere history. In fact, you can trace distinctly the date when it was written,

207 Page 164. See bibliography.

because the events up to that date are given with historical minuteness totally unlike the character of real prophecy.” - ARNOLD.

Desprez writes on page 25:

> It will also be noticed that events distant from the time usually assigned for the composition of this book, such as the profanations of Antiochus, are described at great length and with astonishing minuteness; whilst those near the supposed times of the writer, as the Babylonian invasion of Judea, are treated with succinctness and brevity.

Desprez added a footnote in Latin on the same page 25 from Rosenmuller. The footnote just puts Porphyry's thesis in different Latin words. Thomas Arnold[208], Philip Desprez, and Rosenmuller were simply rephrasing Porphyry’s thesis. They didn't come to the same conclusion independently of each other by comparing history books with the Book of Daniel. They couldn't do that because none of them even had reliable histories of those times, as I will mention later.

**Commentators agree with Porphyry only to a limited extent.** I will show examples below where commentators who accept Porphyry's thesis reject his explanations.

**Daniel 11:20-21.** Porphyry used the Greek Theodotion version of Daniel, not the Hebrew text, not the original Septuagint Daniel, or any other Greek version. An English-speaker can sometimes come closer to reading Daniel the way Porphyry did by reading Brenton's English Septuagint. He translates Dan. 11:20-21 (Theodotion):

> And there shall arise out of his root one that shall cause a plant of the kingdom to pass over his place, earning kingly glory: and yet in those days shall he be broken, yet not openly, nor in war. *One* shall stand on his place, *who* has been set at nought, and they have not put upon him the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in prosperously, and obtain the kingdom by deceitful ways.

---

208 The passage I quoted above is from a letter from 1840. So he had time to learn about the German literature against Daniel in the previous 35 years and could have read Anthony Collins' Scheme of Literal Prophecy. Arnold certainly read Jerome's commentary on Daniel, because he quoted it in a footnote in The History of Rome, saying, "Some remarkable particulars as to the amount of Ptolemy's revenue are preserved by Jerome in his Commentary on Daniel, XI. 5."

Porphyry said that this meant that Ptolemy Epiphanes would obtain the kingdom of Antiochus the Great by using a plot that resulted in the poisoning of Seleucus Philopator[209]. Jerome said that Porphyry's explanation didn't contextually make sense in the light of verse 20 in the LXX[210]. Jerome said that verse 20 referred to Antiochus the Great, and that Ptolemy did not stand in his place, or succeed him. Jerome says that Seleucus, not Ptolemy, arose out of Antiochus the Great's root.

Bevan wrote in a comment on Daniel 11:21 (page 117):

> … it is highly probable that here, as in some other cases, Porphyry's statements are not derived from an independent historical source but are simply deductions drawn from Daniel.

Rowland Williams wrote[211]:

> It did not always occur to us that Porphyry's judgment as a critic in literature was infinitely superior to that of almost any Christian Father, or that his opportunities of information exceeded our own.

But Porphyry's judgment and opportunities of information did not reveal themselves in Dan. 11:20-21, or in a number of other passages.

**Daniel 11:34.** Daniel 11:34 Brenton (LXX Theodotion) reads:

> And when they are weak they shall be helped with a little help: but many shall attach themselves to them with treachery.

Preceding Porphyry by dozens of years, Hippolytus wrote in section 32 of "On Daniel", which I quoted from earlier:

> Daniel, however, adds: “And they shall be holpen with a little help.” For at that time Matthias arose, and Judas Maccabaeus, and helped them, and delivered them from the hand of the Greeks.

---

209 "Porro Porphyrius non vult hunc esse Seleucum, sed Ptolemaeum Epiphanen, qui Seleuco sit molitus insidias … ."

210 "Sed quomodo potest in loco Magni Antiochi stare Ptolemaeus, qui hoc omnino non fecit: maxime quum LXX. interpretati sunt, *& stabit de radice ejus plantatio*, id est, *de germine ejus, & semine* … ."

211 Page vi of the Introduction to Desprez's commentary.

Previously, I quoted Lardner's translation of Porphyry's explanation from Jerome's commentary.[212] Porphyry said that the passage referred to Mattathias and his sons. But some commentators dispute this, because it doesn't seem reasonable to call the help of the so-called Maccabees "a little help". According to Jerome, the Hebrews thought the "little help" in this passage was the help given by one of the Roman emperors, either Severus, Antoninus, or Julian, not help given by the family of Mattathias.

**Daniel 11:38.** Porphyry claimed that Maozim was the same as Modin, the town Mattathias was from. Porphyry relied upon the Theodotion version of Daniel. Porphyry didn't understand Hebrew. And he never quoted Daniel from Symmachus, the original Septuagint, or Aquila, because he apparently didn't know about those versions.

Porphyry made a very simple and wrong explanation. Brenton translated the word *Maozim* "of forces", but showed in a footnote that the word in the Greek text was *Maozim*. Charles Thomson's Septuagint reads for this verse:

> … yet in his place he will glorify god **Maozim** — even a god which his fathers knew not, he will glorify with gold and silver, and precious stones, and with desirable things, … .

*Maozim* is a Latin transliteration of *μαωζιν* in Daniel-Theodotion, which Greek word is itself a transliteration used for the Hebrew word in the text. The translators of Daniel-Theodotion for some reason didn't want to translate the Hebrew word, so they simply wrote the Hebrew in Greek characters instead of translating it. The original Septuagint translators rendered the word as a singular adjective. Jerome translated the word that way in his commentary on Isaiah. But Aquila and most modern translators have translated the word as a genitive plural.

Jerome said in his commentary on these verses:

> Deum **MAOZIM** ridicule Porphyrius interpretatus est, ut diceret in vico **Modin**, unde fuit Mathathias, & filii ejus, Antiochi duces, Jovis posuisse statuam: & compulisse Judaeos, ut ei victimas immolarent, id est, deo **Modin**.

Which I translate:

---

212 From Jerome's commentary: "Parvulum auxilium, Matthathiam significari arbitratur Porphyrius, de vico Modin; qui adversum duces Antiochi rebellavit, & cultum veri Dei servare conatus est."

> Porphyry interpreted the god **Maozim** in a ridiculous manner, saying that the generals of Antiochus placed a statue of Jupiter in the village **[of] Modin**, where Mattathias, and also his sons, was from, and [saying that] they compelled the Jews to sacrifice victims to it, that is, to the god **[of] Modin**.

Modin, the village, was spelled *Μωδειν* in the Greek Bible that Porphyry read [to be transliterated as *Modein* or *Modin*], not *Μαωζιν* [*Maozim*]. Porphyry was determined to say whatever was necessary to prove his theory, and this was the best thing he could come up with for this verse. Some people then and now are highly suggestible; they accept what they are told uncritically. To avoid being misled, a reader at that time needed to object: "But *Modein* is not *Maozim*: they are two different words." Asserting that *Maozim* was *Modin* was not more foolish or more false than some of the statements made by Josephus and Hippolytus which I previously mentioned. Their readers should have objected: "But 1 Maccabees refers to a 3-year defilement of the temple, and 2 Maccabees, a 2-year defilement. Those just aren't the same numbers as in Daniel." My book has still other examples of interpretations that should have seemed suspicious, but were accepted anyway.

Jerome also explained Porphyry's mistake in his Latin commentary on Isaiah 30:1-5[213]:

> Pro fortitudine Pharaonis, quae in hoc loco bis ponitur, in Hebraico scriptum habet MAOZ. Hoc annotavimus, ut quod in Danielis extrema legimus visione Deum MAOZIM, non ut Porphyrius somniat, Deum viculi Modim, sed robustum Deum et fortem intelligamus.

*Maoz* in the passage above is the singular of *maozim*, and is found in the Hebrew text of the passage in Isaiah that Jerome explained. The word *viculi* (= "of the village") is in the genitive case, a signal that *Modim*, its appositive, should be understood in the genitive. I will translate the passage above as follows:

> Instead of *fortitudine* [= strength] of Pharaoh, which is written twice in this passage, MAOZ is written in Hebrew. We have noted this in order that what we read in the last vision of Daniel, God MAOZIM, we understand ─ not as Porphyry dreams, God "of the village of Modim", but ─ "sturdy and strong God".

---

213 From column 402 of Jerome's commentary on Isaiah in the Vallarsi edition (see bibliography.

The use of the word *Maozim* proves that Porphyry used Daniel-Theodotion[214], not the original Septuagint Daniel or Aquila's Greek translation. Jerome said:

> Aquila transtulit, *Deum fortitudinum*; LXX, *Deum fortissimum*.

Which I translate:

> Aquila translated [the Greek words for] *the god of powers*; the Seventy [translated the Greek words for] *most mighty god*.

Notice that in his commentary on Isaiah, Jerome understood *maozim* as an adjective (*robustum* or *fortem*, similar to how the original Septuagint (= the Seventy) did (*fortissimum*, a superlative adjective). But Aquila translated with a genitive plural (*fortitudinum*). Most English Bibles, translating from the Hebrew, agree with Aquila that the word is a genitive plural noun and means *god of fortresses* or something similar. But nobody who has studied the matter agrees with Porphyry that *Modin* is *Maozim*. They are two different words with enough of a resemblance to impress ignorant people.

**Daniel 11:40-41.** Porphyry said that Daniel 11:40-41 referred to another war between Antiochus and Ptolemy Philometor in the 11th year of his reign[215]:

Desprez, who suspected that this war never happened, tried to defend Porphyry by saying on page 212 that Porphyry was repeating a previous war, not inventing one that never happened. Bevan rejected all explanations supporting Porphyry at the end of Daniel 11 on pages 163-164, part of which I quote below:

> Porphyry, quoted by Jerome, states that in the 11th year of his reign (i.e. in 165 B.C.) Antiochus again made war upon Egypt, and explains Dan. xi. 40-43 as referring to this campaign. Several modern interpreters, e.g. Havernick and Hoffmann, have accepted Porphyry's explanation. It is, however, quite incredible that the author of Daniel is here describing facts. A conquest of Egypt such as we read of in this passage, could not have been passed over

---

214 Bevan wrote on p. 3: "… One striking proof of the popularity of Theodotion's Daniel and of the obscurity into which the Septuagint text fell, is that Porphyry, writing about 270 A.D., based his criticism of the Book of Daniel upon Theodotion's version, which he believed to be the original."

215 "Et haec Porphyrius ad Antiochum refert: quod undecimo anno regni sui rursus contra sororis filium Ptolemaeum Philometorem dimicaverit."

> in silence by all the historians, for Egypt was at that time under Roman protection and an attack upon the country must therefore have at once produced a war with Rome. … We are therefore forced to conclude that Porphyry was here in error. … In any case no historical argument can be built upon Porphyry's treatment of the passage, for it is evident (as Meinhold has observed) that when he describes Antiochus as pitching his tent "in the place called Apedno between the Tigris and the Euphrates", the narrative is based upon nothing but a false interpretation of Dan. xi. 45.

**Daniel 11:45.** The words *Apedno* and *Saba* are in this part of Daniel-Theodotion: *πηξει την σκηνην αυτου* ***εφαδανω*** *ανα μεσον των θαλασσων εις ορος* ***σαβι*** *αγιον*. Those Greek words could be transliterated *ephadano* and *sabi*. I can't explain why Jerome's transliterations are different. The Old Latin text read *Aphedano* according to Sabatier (1751), suggesting a Greek pronunciation in the original Septuagint of Daniel similar to *εφαδανω*. This verse reads in the Douay:

> And he shall fix his tabernacle **Apadno** between the seas, upon a glorious and holy mountain: and he shall come even to the top thereof, and none shall help him.

See the quotation I gave previously where Bevan quotes Meinhold in rejecting Porphyry's explanation of Apadno.

Jerome said that Porphyry ignorantly thought that *Saba* (*ορος* ***σαβι*** *αγιον* in Dan. 11:45) was the name of a mountain as a result of using Daniel-Theodotion:

> Montem autem inclytum idcirco praeteriit, quia secutus est Theodotionis interpretationem, qui ait: *inter media maria super montem* ***Saba*** *sanctum*. Quumque **Saba** nomen montis, vel Armeniae, vel Mesopotamiae putet, quare sit sanctus dicere non potest … .

Which I translate:

> But he omits the holy mountain for this reason: because he followed the translation of Theodotion, who says: *between the seas upon the holy Mount Saba*. And although he thinks [that] Saba is the name of a mountain, either of Armenia or of Mesopotamia, he can't say why [it] is holy … .

Hugo Grotius said (in 1775) that Porphyry was mistaken for thinking that *Apedno* and *Saba*[216] in Daniel 11:45 were names of places, partly because of his ignorance of Hebrew and Syriac[217]. The Greek version of Symmachus and also the original Septuagint version of Daniel omit the Hebrew words *Saba* and *Apedno*. But the mysterious Hebrew words were useful to Porphyry so he could read meanings into them.

**Daniel 12:1-3.** Daniel 12:1 reads in the Brenton translation:

> And at that time Michael the great prince shall stand up, that stands over the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of tribulation, such tribulation as has not been from the time that there was a nation on the earth until that time: at that time thy people shall be delivered, *even* every one that is written in the book.

Porphyry said that the verses refer to the time of the tribulation inflicted on the Jews by Lysias's army, when Antiochus was invading Persia[218]. The deliverance of the Jews was the victory over Lysias and also the death of Antiochus in Persia[219]. The Jews who were written in the book of God were those who very courageously defended the Law[220].

Daniel 12:2 Brenton LXX reads:

> And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to reproach and everlasting shame.

---

216 As the two words are spelled in column 722 of the Vallarsi text of Jerome's commentary.

217 "Porphyrius qui *Aphadno* et *Sabi* putavit esse nomina loci propria, partim ignoratione sermonis Hebraici et Syriaci, …". From page 397 of Hugonis Grotii Annotationes in Vetus Testamentum Vol. 1, (Halae, 1775).

218 "Et hoc, inquit, de Antiocho scriptum est, qui vadens in Persidem, Lysiae qui Antiochiae, & Phoeniciae praeerat, reliquit exercitum, ut adversum Judaeos pugnaret, urbemque eorum Jerusalem subverteret,"

219 "Reddita autem victoria, & caesis Antiochi ducibus, ipsoque Antiocho in Perside mortuo, salvatus est populus Israel:"

220 "omnes qui scripti erant in libro Dei, hoc est, qui Legem fortissime defenderunt,"

Porphyry had two explanations: (a) the righteous Jews figuratively arose from the graves of their afflictions[221] and (b) the followers of Mattathias and his sons came out of their caves, this being a metaphorical resurrection.[222] I quoted Lardner's translation of Porphyry's interpretation earlier.

Desprez, who wrote an early critical English commentary on Daniel, quotes Porphyry's belief in a footnote in Latin (pages 230-1), but acknowledges that the Jews of the Maccabean age, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the author of the Apocalypse believed in a real resurrection from the dead, not just a "political restoration of the holy people". Bevan, Driver, Farrar, and other authors who were better known than Desprez thought that a real resurrection from the dead was being spoken of. I couldn't find any author, with the time and resources I had, who copied Porphyry's explanation of the resurrection of the dead.

Ephraem the Syrian interpreted both a metaphorical and a literal resurrection[223]. His metaphorical explanation might have been the same as Porphyry's. Luis de Alcazar[224] favored a metaphorical explanation of the resurrection, but different from

---

221 "hi qui quasi in terrae pulvere dormiebant, & operti erant malorum pondere, & quasi in sepulcris miseriarum reconditi, ad insperatam victoriam de terrae pulvere surrexerunt, & de humo elevaverunt caput, custodes Legis resurgentes in vitam aeternam, & praevaricatores in opprobrium sempiternum."

222 "multos Judaeorum sub Matthathia & Juda Machabaeo ad eremum confugisse, & latuisse in speluncis, & in cavernis petrarum, ac post victoriam processisse, & haec μεταφορικως quasi de resurrectione mortuorum esse praedicta."

223 His commentary was originally in Syriac, not Latin. Ephraem's commentary on Daniel 12:2 reads, as I translate it from the Benedictus Latin text: "*And many who are sleeping in the ground will awaken:* Because after the salvation and liberty declared with the assistance of Zerubbabel, a new evil will overpower [them] like sleep. [After] which [= the new evil] has been dispelled like a deep sleep, they will be awakened as if from the dust." In the Vulgate, an evil (*malum*) can be a sin (Deut. 31:18) or an affliction (Deut. 31:17, 21). I think that Ephraem means a new affliction (*novum malum*), the Babylonian captivity being the first. Zerubbabel helped free the Jews from servitude to Babylon. But the Jews later lost their religious liberty and were afflicted by new evils. The Jews were, so to speak, sleeping in death when they lost their religious liberty.

224 *Vestigatio Arcani Sensus in Apocalypsi,* by Luis de Alcazar. (Lyon, 1618). Digitized by Google.

Porphyry's[225]. I suggested earlier that Mattathias might have understood the resurrection to be figurative. Porphyry and Ephraem the Syrian might have gotten their interpretations ultimately from Mattathias and his contemporaries, after being handed down over many generations. But Luke and Jesus didn't say anything about a figurative resurrection.

225 Luis de Alcazar (Ludovicus ab Alcasar) said that the genuine, or original sense of Daniel 12:2 was figurative. He said that the word "many" in Daniel 12:2 should not be understood as "all". And he said that men who imitated the deeds and strength of notable people in Bible history appeared, and that this was a figurative resurrection. The zeal of Phinehas was repeated in the zeal of Mattathias. The rage and impiety of the ancient Pharaoh lived again in the savageness of Antiochus. Phineas lived again in Mattathias. The strength of Joshua lived again in the strength of Judas and his brothers. De Alcazar believed in a literal resurrection, but that the immediate or original sense of Daniel 12:2 was figurative.

## Bibliography.

I got most of the books in the Bibliography online. Most were digitized by Google or Microsoft. The books are listed according to the date of publication of the edition I used.

ASV = American Standard Version of 1901.

JPS = Jewish Publication Society Bible of 1917. See the full entry below.

KJV = King James Version, or Authorized Version of 1611.

YLT= Young's Literal Translation by Robert Young (second Edition of 1863). It is listed below under its correct name.

The Geneva Bible = The Bible and Holy Scriptures Conteyned in the Olde and New Testament (Geneva, 1560).

Explanatio Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri in Danielem Prophetam ad Pammachium et Marcellam, part of volume 5 of Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Stridonensis Prebyteri Operum, compiled by Dominic Vallarsi (Verona, 1736).

Cicero's Epistles to Atticus With Notes Historical, Explanatory, and Critical, translated into English by William Guthrie. Vol. 2 (London, 1752).

The Holy Bible Translated from the Latin Vulgat, etc. The Sixth Edition. (Dublin, 1794). Also the 1750 edition.

The Holy Bible Translated From the Latin Vulgat, etc. (Dublin, 1791).

Charles Thomson = The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Covenant, etc., by Charles Thomson (Philadelphia, 1808).

Nathaniel Lardner = The Works of Nathaniel Lardner, by Nathaniel Lardner, Volume 4 of 5; (London, 1815).

James Hatley Frere = Three Letters on the Prophecies, On the True Place of the Seventh Seal, the Infidel Individual Antichrist; and Antiochus Epiphanes As a Supposed Subject of Prophecy. Being in Continuation of Eight Letters, Published in 1831. James Hatley Frere (London, 1833).

Albert Barnes = Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the Gospels Designed For Sunday School Teachers and Bible Classes, by Albert Barnes. Vol. 1 of 2. 17th edition, revised and corrected. (New York, 1841).

Brenton LXX = The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament According to the Vatican Text, Translated Into English, etc., by Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton, in 2 Volumes. (London, 1844). Digitized by Google.

The Works of Flavius Josephus, the Learned and Authentic Jewish Historian and Celebrated Warrior. To Which Are Added Seven Dissertations, etc. translated by William Whiston. (New York, J.S. Virtue, 1849).

The Works of Flavius Josephus, etc., translated by William Whiston (H. S. & J. Applegate, Cincinnati, 1850).

Bagster LXX =The Greek Septuagint Version of the Old Testament, According to the Vatican Edition: Together with The Real Septuagint Version of Daniel and the Apocrypha Including the Fourth Book of Maccabees and an Historical Introduction (London, Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1851?)

John Calvin = Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel, etc., by John Calvin. Translated by Thomas Myers. Volumes One and Two. (Edinburgh, 1852-3).

Webster & Wilkinson = The Greek New Testament With Notes Grammatical and Exegetical, by William Webster and William Francis Wilkinson Vol. II. - Containing the Epistles and the Apocalypse (London, 1861.) Digitized by Google.

Tischendorf = Novum Testamentum Graece, etc., edited by Constantinus Tischendorf, Editio Stereotypa Secunda, (Leipzig, 1862).

Young's Literal Translation = The Holy Bible, Consisting of the Old and New Covenants Translated According to the Letter and Idioms of the Original Languages, by Robert Young. Second Edition. (Edinburgh, 1863.) Digitized by Google.

Josephus, Flavius. The Works of Flavius Josephus, the Learned And Authentic Jewish Historian And Celebrated Warrior.: To Which Are Added Seven Dissertations, Etc. (New York: Virtue and Yorston, 1874).

The Works of Flavius Josephus, by Flavius Josephus, and William Whiston (London: Ward, Lock, & Co., 1879)

Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, by The Rev. John M'Clintock and James Strong. Numerous volumes. (New York, 1880-1894).

A Short Commentary on the Book of Daniel For the Use of Students, by A.A. Bevan (Cambridge, 1892).

Encyclopaedia Biblica. Edited by The Rev. T.K. Cheyne and L. Sutherland Black. 4 Volumes. (New York, 1899-1903).

American Standard Version = The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments: translated out of the original tongues, being the version set forth A.D. 1611. Compared with the most ancient authorities and revised A.D. 1881-1885. Newly edited by the American Revision Committee A.D. 1901. Digitized by Google.

An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, by S.R. Driver. New edition. (New York, 1910). Part of the International Theological Library.

The Catholic Encyclopedia. Charles George Herbermann, editor. 15 volumes (New York, 1913). Digitized by Google.

JPS = The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoretic Text A New Translation, etc., by The Jewish Publication Society of America (Philadelphia, 1917).

Alfred Plummer = Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke, by Alfred Plummer; 5th edition (Edinburgh, 1922.)